Problems of COMMUNISM

Khrushchev's "Time Factor"

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The French and Italian CP's

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Communism and Arab Nationalism

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Moscow and the WFTU

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Khrushchev at the Helm: III

EDITORS' NOTE: The slogan of "catching up with and overtaking the advanced capitalist countries" is not new in the Soviet lexicon. Paradoxically reflecting both a sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* the industrialized West as well as a spirit of confidence in communism's inevitable triumph, the slogan was used repeatedly during the 1930's to spur the Soviet population to greater efforts and to arouse faith in the glorious (though distant) future of happiness and plenty. But at no time has it been employed with more buoyancy and vigor than under the reign of Nikita Khrushchev. The "advanced capitalist countries" having been replaced by "the United States," the new slogan, perhaps more than anything else, typifies Khrushchev's profound belief that the eventual "victory of communism" will come about—but only by greater efforts and exertion on the part of the Soviet people.

It is with the psychological implications and the economic validity of this self-proclaimed race with the US—as well as with the general preoccupation with time in Soviet economic planning—that Mr. Grossman's article is concerned. The series of surveys of major Soviet policies instituted under Khrushchev—of which this is the sixth—will continue in the forthcoming issue of this journal.

Communism in a Hurry:

The "Time Factor" in Soviet Economics

By Gregory Grossman

THE COMMUNIST ATTITUDE toward time is not without paradoxes. In a sense, by virtue of its historical determinism, Marxism is a philosophy of the relation of Man to Time, of the logical and orderly succession of historical stages, and of the necessity and imminence of events. Yet the Leninist does not leave the inevitable to its own progress; he must be ever watchful for opportunities. The right moment for action must be seized lest it slip by forever. Time to the Communist is a faithful but recalcitrant ally.

Or take Marxian economics. One of its most important axioms is that labor time is the basis of exchange value. On this crucial assumption (largely rejected by the major economists already in Marx's own day) rest elaborate theorems of class relations, of exploitation, of capitalist crises, and of the eventual breakdown of the capitalist system. Applied by Marx only to unplanned market economies, the "labor theory of value" was declared, in the early 1940's, to hold as an "economic law" in the Soviet Union as well. This position is still officially maintained, although its exact meaning and practical consequences have never been specified. But —and this is a major difficulty with which Soviet economics and planning have had to contend—if value is determined by labor time, how compare values over time? For example, is an hour's labor today equivalent to an hour's work five years hence? The labor theory of value, at least in the naive form adopted by Soviet economists, would seem to say "yes." But this is patently absurd to any economist, planner or statesman. Thus in a country which has proclaimed a race against time,

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the formal relation between economic value and time has been a bothersome theoretical problem and a drag on the efficiency of planning for several decades.

Three events in mid-1958 underscore the pressing problem of time in Soviet planning. One was the apparent decision to step up the pace in the economic contest with the United States. Another was the resolution—more accurately perhaps, near-resolution—of the long-smoldering debate regarding the formal handling of time in economic calculations, where there is choice among different time-patterns of outlays that result in identical benefits to the economy. And thirdly, resting on both of these developments came Khrushchev's pronouncement—in the course of the ceremonies marking the commissioning of the hydroelectric station at Kuibyshev on the Volga—that henceforth such grandiose hydroelectric projects would be reappraised from the standpoint of the "time factor." According to Khrushchev, they take too much capital and too much time to build. Granted that the electrical energy generated by water power is cheaper than that generated by steam, still:

The element of time is worth more in this matter than any immediate material outlays, for time lost cannot be compensated by any amount of money. We have to gain 10 to 15 years in the peaceful competition with capitalist countries. And when we have gained them and have developed our industry even further, then we shall be able to allot the funds necessary for constructing hydroelectric stations.[1]

Momentum and Timing

The problems of formal incorporation of time into the economic calculus should not, of course, be confused with the art of timing tactical and strategic moves. In the latter respect Khrushchev has shown himself to be very skillful. A good example is his agricultural program, where by an appropriate sequence and timing of steps he has been able to create a definite upward momentum and to exploit it for further advances.[2]

There can be little doubt that the all but modest predictions surrounding the launching of the seven-year plan (1959-1965) are also primarily designed to produce a new momentum, and in this case on more fronts than one. The world is being told over and over again with an air of utmost confidence that by 1970, or even sooner, the USSR will have caught up with the United States in production *per capita,* and that consequently the Soviet "material standard of living" will then have caught up with the American (which does not follow logically at all[3]). The road of catching up with the US will also take the Soviet society to "communism" in the sense of the ultimate society of abundance and perfect harmony. The seven-year plan, we are told, is to take a long stride in this direction.

Setting the goal of catching up on a *per capita* basis with the most opulent country in the world, and specifying a target date (10 to 12 years hence) for the attainment of that goal, is a very clever move. It attracts the world's attention in as vivid a fashion as any to the dynamic nature of the Soviet economy, and by implication to the lagging pace of capitalism. It focuses on "peaceful competition" (though nothing in the seven-year plan indicates any reduction in the volume of resources devoted to military use). It raises spirits and mobilizes energies at home by means of a vision of the American standard of living at the end of another big push for a decade or so. In short, it is to create momentum on which the USSR, and Khrushchev himself, can capitalize internally and externally.

It seems to have escaped general notice, in part thanks to the studied silence on this point by the Soviet press itself, that the present "catch up and overtake" campaign is a repetition of a very similar campaign launched by Stalin just 20 years earlier.

The time has come to take practical measures to solve the basic economic task of the USSR: to catch up with and overtake . . . economically the most developed capitalist countries of Europe and the United States of America. . . . Then and then only will the significance of the new era in the development of the USSR unfold itself, the era of transition from a socialist to a Communist society.

And:

Only in the event that we overtake economically the main capitalist countries shall we be able to regard our country as fully saturated with consumer goods, and we shall [then] be able to go over from the first to the second phase of communism. What do we need in order to overtake the economically most powerful capitalist countries? . . . a determined and unremitting desire to move ahead and a readiness to bear sacrifices . . . and, lastly, time . . . 10-15 years.

These are not Khrushchev's words at the 21st Party Congress in 1959. They are the words of Molotov and Stalin speaking at the 18th Congress in March 1939, and their purposes clearly were then, as their successor's are now, to instill an impression of strength and invincibility abroad, and to spur production efforts at home.

[1] *Pravda,* August 11, 1958.

[2] For an up-to-date and valuable review of post-Stalin developments in Soviet agriculture, see Lazar Volin's "Reform in Agriculture," *Problems of Communism,* No. 1 (Jan.-Feb.), 1959.

[3] It does not follow logically, because consumption takes a considerably smaller portion of the total national product in the USSR than in the U. S.; conversely, investment and military uses take considerably larger portions.

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THE "TIME FACTOR": TWO ASPECTS

Self-Criticism

Self-Confidence

Left: A "Portrait of a Parasite." Caption reads: "Why, I'm ready to enter into communism this very day."

—From Krokodil *(Moscow), February 28, 1959*

Right: "The Decisive Tournament." Caption upper right quotes Khrushchev's 21st Party Congress speech: "The basic problem of the coming septennium is the problem of winning as much time as possible in the worldwide competition between capitalism and socialism."

—From Krokodil, *February 10, 1959*

Certainly, 1959 is not 1939. While the international horizon again carries clouds of war, the economy is not now, as it was temporarily then, in a stagnant condition, and the outlook for the average man is not as bleak as it was 20 years ago. Why then impose a deadline, 10 to 12 years hence, to "catch up" with the United States?

The answer seems to lie, at least in part, in the fact that Soviet economic growth, though still rapid, has been slowing down and is bound to continue to slow down in comparison with the first five years after Stalin's death. The great post-Stalin advance in agriculture has already taken place, thanks chiefly to the "new lands" and to favorable meteorological conditions. Such gains in agricultural production as are to come in the near future will have to be wrested with greater effort. Nor can the rest of the economy, including industry, count on continuing at the old rates of growth, mainly due to the limited opportunity (for demographic and economic reasons) to expand the non-agricultural labor force.[4]

But the population is still growing at over one and one-half percent per year. If the USSR is not to slow down seriously in its self-proclaimed economic race with the United States, or if improvements in consumer welfare are not to be sacrificed drastically for the sake of this race, mobilization of popular energies and efforts by means of an inspiring and not-too-distant goal is in order. American productivity and the American standard of living provide this goal, and the Soviet population is therefore exhorted to put its whole shoulder to

[4] These and other retarding factors in Soviet economic growth have been discussed by the author in "Thirty Years of Soviet Industrialization," *Soviet Survey* (London), October-December 1958. The control figures for the seven-year plan, which appeared since, indicate that nearly 12 million persons—a large number—are to be added to the category of "workers and employees" over the septennium (this category essentially comprises non-peasant employment). However, this figure must be interpreted with considerable caution. It undoubtedly includes the young people who, under the latest educational reform, are now to go to work at the age of 14-15 instead of continuing in school as before. It may also include a substantial number of peasants who are to be reclassified as workers by virtue of the transformation of their collective farms into state farms.

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the wheel so as to attain it in a decade's big push.[5]

As a rousing slogan and a rallying cry, "catching up with America" has much in its favor. Not only is the idea superficially comprehensible to the simplest mind—surely more so than the notion of "passing over to the higher phase of communism"—but also few save the statistically sophisticated appreciate the practical and conceptual difficulties and the quantitative indeterminacy of comparing the over-all outputs of two complex modern economies. The American and the Soviet economy each produce many thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of commodities and services which in few cases are completely identical. They differ in numberless ways: in size, quality, appearance, functional and aesthetic characteristics, durability, serviceableness, and so forth *ad infinitum*. It is a most difficult, perhaps impossible task to match a substantial proportion of the products of the two countries.

But matching the products of the two countries is only the beginning of the problem. Comparing the *totality* of the goods produced in one country with the *totality* of the goods produced in the other—and this is what "catching up" necessarily means in statistical terms—implies that all the goods in *both* countries must be brought to a common denominator. Apples and oranges, shoes and ships and sealing wax, must be added together to yield a synthetic total for each country, and then the totals must be compared to determine how large the total (or *per capita*) output of one country is in relation to the total (or *per capita*) output of the other. The common denominator is usually some monetary unit —dollar, ruble, pound sterling—and each commodity or service must be assigned its relative importance—the statistician calls it the commodity's "weight"—in terms of that unit. Alas, even the competent and conscientious statistician has many systems of weights to choose from, each with a perfectly valid logic of its own, but each resulting in a different ratio between the total (or *per capita*) outputs of the two countries.

Consider then the problem of comparing the total outputs of two economies, one of which is characterized by a boundless variety of products, by emphasis on quality and finish, by catering to the needs and conveniences of the customer—the other, by an austere assortment of products, by frequent sacrifice of quality for quantity, and by taking the customer for granted. Add to this the complexities of statistical weighting. The result is a fertile field for questionable comparisons and for impressing an uninitiated audience to whom the notion of "catching up" is a very simple one.

[5] In even starker fashion the slogan of catching up with the level of production in Britain is used in Chinese propaganda.

Another great advantage of the "catching-up" campaign is that partial successes can be periodically proclaimed. Today one catches up in butter production, tomorrow in coal output or in woolen fabrics. Each instance provides cause for rejoicing and for a reminder of the ground still to be won. Of course not everything is suitable for this purpose. The particular product must not evoke pre-industrial images (horse carts won't do). Better if it is a prestige item, like butter.[6]

The Turning Point in Mid-1958

The year from mid-1957 to mid-1958 was marked by a relatively high degree of attention to the consumer on the part of the regime. Khrushchev's campaign to catch up with the United States in the *per capita* production of milk, butter, and meat was proclaimed during the latter part of May 1957. At the end of July the party and government announced a bold program "to liquidate the housing shortage in the course of 10 to 12 years."[7] When, speaking at the ceremonies marking the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution on November 7, Khrushchev revealed some of the targets of the 15-year plan for 1972, those for consumers' goods did not appear to be much more modest than those for producers' goods. Early in 1958 the cotton-growing republics of the Soviet Union pledged themselves to ambitious targets for raw cotton output in 1965, and two and one-half months later Khrushchev published his far-reaching program for chemicals and synthetics—two steps that promised a substantial improvement in the supply of fabrics and other goods.

Yet much as the signs pointed in that direction, it would have been an error at the time to expect a "soft" (*i.e.*, relatively consumer-oriented) seven-year plan. When the control figures for the plan were pub-

[6] Implementation of the campaign to catch up with the US in the production of milk, butter, and meat has provided numerous interesting hints as to how similar campaigns may be handled in the future. To mention just a few points: (1) The statistical definitions of "milk" and of "meat" were expanded a year before the campaign was launched, thereby making these categories non-comparable with earlier Soviet series. (2) Usually campaign slogans refer to catching up with the *per capita* levels "in the United States of America, the foremost capitalist country," thereby giving the impression that these *per capita* levels are also the highest in the world. In point of fact, however, *per capita* milk, butter, and even meat production in the US are not the highest in the world by substantial margins. (3) No mention is made of margarine, the consumption of which now exceeds that of butter in America, nor of cheese, the US production of which approximates that of butter, in comparison to the USSR's relatively small output.

[7] *Pravda*, August 2, 1957.

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lished in mid-November 1958 they showed a stepping up in the annual rate of industrial growth compared with Khrushchev's 15-year targets of a year earlier, and a "hardening" of targets as if to reflect heightened impatience to "catch up" with the US. Thus the spread between the overall targets for producers' goods and consumers' goods widened in favor of the former.[8] Especially notable in relation to other targets is the large investment program. If the agricultural equipment to be purchased by collective farms is to be included with state investment (as it previously was), the volume of state investment over the whole seven years, as planned, will be 90 or more percent larger than over the preceding septennium. In addition, sizable increases in the investment by and in collective farms on their own account, and in private homes by the population, are anticipated. Compare this with the expected increase in the "consumption fund" of 60-63 percent,[9] and of 62 percent in the volume of retail sales by state and cooperative stores,[10] between 1958 and 1965.

In this connection, it may be interesting to trace the evolution of the long-range targets for steel. Speaking at the Supreme Soviet session in May 1957, I. P. Bardin, the most authoritative figure in Soviet steel planning, called for an output of 125-150 million metric tons of steel in 1980, which implies an average annual increase of 4-5 percent. In November 1957, Khrushchev set a target of 100-120 million tons by 1972, implying an average annual increase of 5-6 percent. In April 1958 (according to a Tass release broadcast by Radio Moscow on April 23, 1958), Bardin revealed the seven-year plan's target for 1965 as 80 million tons—representing a 6 percent average annual rate of increase. Finally, the control figures for the SYP posit a target of 86-91 million tons by 1965, calling for an average annual rate of increase of 6.5-7.5 percent from 1958. These figures suggest that the seven-year plan was substantially "hardened" sometime in mid-1958. The reader may wish to speculate as to what domestic or international developments may have prompted this redirection of Soviet long-range planning.

Toward Greater Rationality?

A country bent on winning an economic race in a short period of time against a formidable adversary would, if it proceeded rationally, choose a favorable yardstick for measuring its progress against that of the opponent, would mobilize popular support and enthusiasm for the race, would plow back into the expansion of its productive capacity as high a fraction of its current resources as possible, and would distribute its resources among the various alternative uses so as to obtain the most out of them for the task at hand. The first three of these the Soviet leaders are more or less doing, as we have already seen. The yardstick with which to measure their progress in the race is in their own hands and of their own choosing. An intense effort is being made to elicit popular support for the race through the use of the "catch up with America" slogan. And, following the set-back resulting from the poorly-constructed and overly-optimistic control figures for the sixth five-year plan, investment is once again being stepped up in relation to other end-uses, although the imperatives of military defense and the need to satisfy the popular desire for substantial improvement in the standard of living are keeping the volume of investment within bounds.

The fourth consideration—efficient allocation af available resources to meet the posited goals—has also been receiving much more careful attention than ever before. Concomitantly, a radical reorientation of Soviet economics has come into effect, which is not without serious implications for the governing ideology on the one hand and the evolving society and polity on the other.[11]

The great industrial advance under Stalin was accomplished largely by drawing on four well-nigh limit-

[8]The original (and since discarded) control figures for the sixth FYP (1956-1960) called for the following increases (over five years): gross output of all industry, 65 percent; gross output of producers' goods, 70 percent; of consumers' goods, 60 percent. The control figures for the seven-year plan call for the following increases: all industry, 78 percent; producers' goods, 85-88 percent; consumers' goods, 62-65 percent. *Cf.* Leon M. Herman, "The Seven Year Haul," *Problems of Communism,* March-April 1959.

[9]The "consumption fund" is presumably the portion of the national product going into consumption, but its composition and derivation are not clear. It probably includes consumption of material goods for military and other government use.

[10]The retail sales figure must be interpreted with considerable caution, for it almost certainly exaggerates the prospective increase in consumption. Consider: (a) sales in the so-called collective farm markets, not included in this figure, have been declining and will undoubtedly continue to decline relative to other retail sales; (b) the shift from collective farms to state farms, from grain to technical crops, and from remuneration in kind to payment in cash, as well as the pressure against peasants' private plots, are likely to make peasants more dependent on "official" retail sales and less on self-supply; (c) it is not clear whether sales of parts and supplies for agricultural equipment to collective farms, or even if the equipment itself, will henceforth be counted as retail sales.

[11]For a lucid and stimulating discussion of some of these problems, the reader is referred to Alec Nove's "The Politics of Economic Rationality," *Social Research,* Vol. 25, No. 2, 1958.

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less reservoirs (or so they seemed to be at the time): the large surplus of manpower of the villages, the rich natural resources of the country, the bountiful technology of the industrial world, and the capacity of the Soviet consumer to endure—to be sure, under political repression and police control—prolonged and heavy privation. Vast resources were mobilized for "socialist construction" in this manner, but no one who has looked into the record can say that these resources were efficiently used. In fact they were wasted at an appalling rate due to the lack of a clear conception of what efficient resource allocation entails, to confusion and stupidity in planning, to various institutional factors, and to the unpreparedness of the population for rapid industrial advance. By the time Stalin's successors took over, the reservoirs were no longer full; indeed some of them, especially the pool of surplus manpower, were nearly empty. Thus the question of better husbanding of resources, of economic rationality, was crucial.

A number of steps in the direction of greater economic rationality either have been taken in the past few years or are now being intensely debated. Among them, the problem of price formation in the state sector should be particularly noted. It has been under discussion for two years now, and an official resolution of the issues is probably not far away. Whether the price reform to come will lean more in the direction of rationality, producing a price structure reasonably expressive of opportunity-costs within the Soviet economy and thus facilitating the efficient allocation of resources, or will bow to Marxian doctrine and enthrone the labor theory of value even more firmly, remains to be seen.

Victory for the "Rationalists"

Of very great interest in this regard, and of direct relevance to the problem of the "time factor," is the resolution in mid-1958 of the long-smoldering issue of choice among alternative technologies, an issue that revolved around the validity of applying, under Soviet conditions, an interest rate (or some surrogate thereof) in order to decide how much capital should be invested to produce a given amount of a certain product.

The matter has had a long and sinuous history in the USSR. Briefly, the use of the interest rate in economic calculation was abolished in the early 1930's as a "bourgeois category." The effect was to make capital (investible resources) a free good when in fact it was extremely scarce during the five-year plan era, and to lead to a preference for unnecessarily capital-intensive variants of investment projects. In fact, of course, the full demand for capital could not be satisfied, and it was allo-

CATCHING UP

Upper left: "In 1965 it is planned to smelt 65-70 million tons of pig iron—From the theses of . . . Khrushchev at the 21st Congress . . ." Below: "A Shower for the Advocates of Capitalism."

—From Krokodil, November 30, 1958

cated "administratively" according to a scale of priorities and certain rule-of-thumb criteria. To meet this problem, some of the planners, mostly at intermediate levels, were led to set up for their own guidance "minimum admissible recoupment periods." That is to say, they would use additional capital on investment projects only if the consequent savings in current cost paid for the extra capital in no more than a given number of years. Thus in a backhanded way, by means of the minimum recoupment periods[12] (additional capital/annual savings in operating cost resulting therefrom), these planners were introducing the concept of a minimum rate of return on capital (annual savings in operating cost/additional capital)—that is, in effect, an interest rate.

For about a decade these methods remained relatively unnoticed. In 1948-49 they were discovered by some Soviet economists and condemned on Marxian theoretical and ideological grounds. However, the condemnation did not bring about the complete abandonment of the "recoupment period" device, and indeed only a year after Stalin's death a partial and cautious authoritative approval of the device was published,[13] which seems to

[12] In American business practice the recoupment period is usually called the "pay-off period" or the "pay-out period."

[13] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, 1954, No. 3, pp. 99-113. For a commentary see Alfred Zauberman, "A Note on Soviet Capital Controversy," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 1955.

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have led to its widespread adoption in Soviet economic planning. This was not entirely surprising since the device, primitive as it is, is a very convenient—indeed almost an unavoidable—aid to planning. In August 1956, this time not only in response to the needs of planning, but also in response to an urgent need to develop a system of rewards for innovators, the State Commission for New Technology *(Gostekhnika)* issued a "temporary model methodology" for computing the efficiency of capital investment which once again permitted the use of the "recoupment period" as a criterion of selection among alternative technologies.

In mid-1958 the issue was finally resolved. The solution took the form of "recommendations" by a special conference on the subject convened by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.[14] Significantly, the recommendations went almost full length in the "rationalist" direction, calling for the extensive use of "recoupment periods" and interest rates (though not so called) in economic calculation in connection with investment planning. However, the determination of appropriate interest rates and maximum admissible recoupment periods was left to the individual industries, and little theoretical guidance was given on this score by the recommendations (as indeed may have been expected because of the peculiar inability of the Marxian theory of value to cope with this problem).

The immediate practical significance of this event should perhaps not be overrated. Chances are that in itself the formal incorporation of the "time factor" into the economic calculus is going to add only moderately to the effectiveness of resource utilization in Soviet investment planning—and to that modest extent, only after the more fundamental problem of rationalizing the whole price structure is resolved. Its import lies, rather, in the clear-cut major victory for the "rationalists" as against the "dogmatists," and in the sign of the times that it represents.

Present *vs.* Future

As for the third development in 1958 mentioned earlier in the article—the change of policy with regard to hydroelectric stations—very little sophisticated economic calculus was needed to arrive at it. For various reasons, among which prestige considerations must have ranked high, the Soviet leadership until recently showed a preference for hydroelectric power stations, particularly the grandiose ones, as against thermal stations. This preference was buttressed by certain bases in economic calculation, such as the failure to charge interest on capital invested (which is, of course, much larger in hydro stations) and the failure to ascribe any value to the land flooded behind the dams.

However, hydroelectric construction was taking a long time (at least from the standpoint of the race with the US) and was using a considerable fraction of investible resources. With the emphasis on quick returns and postponement of outlays that the economic race logically calls for (Khrushchev's "time factor"), a shift from hydroelectric power to thermal power, based especially on the cheap and plentiful but hitherto neglected resource of natural gas, makes sense. From the standpoint of actual planning, of course, it is not so much a matter of emphasizing the one as against the other as finding the optimal balance between the two. Whether Soviet thinking is sufficiently clear-headed on this subject at the moment—and it appears from remarks at the 21st Congress of the CPSU that political interests and personal passions are heavily involved in the matter—and whether the Soviet economic calculus is sufficiently precise to bring about the proper balance remains to be seen.

In a sense the latest educational reform also represents a deference to the "time factor." To the extent that it emphasizes the immediate absorption of young people into the labor force, it necessarily deemphasizes the accumulation of technical and scientific skills through advanced study, or if one will, the accumulation of "human capital" for the future; in other words, the educational reform in effect sacrifices some of the nation's future productive capacity for production in the near term.

* * *

The Soviet economy is in a hurry; it is pressing hard against its means. This more than anything else is pushing its leaders toward more prudent (*i.e.,* rational) techniques of husbanding and utilizing resources. Thus the "time factor" in economic calculation is now receiving formal attention and official obeisance. Whether greater economic rationality in this sense must eventually remold the spirit of the society and thereby affect benignly the very ends the Soviet regime seeks and the values it professes—whether, in effect, the servant will humanize the master—remains to be seen. Those who so believe cannot overlook the fact that more rational paths are also more direct and speedier paths to the posited goals. In the meantime, the commitment of Soviet society to an all-out economic contest under dictatorial direction, the thoroughgoing enlistment of the population's energies and minds to this end, and the staking of so much by the regime on the race, do not seem to be especially favorable conditions for accelerating the transformations in the body politic for which economic rationality is reputedly a catalyst.

[14] *Voprosy ekonomiki,* 1958, No. 9, pp. 154-62.

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Aftermath of October

EDITORS' NOTE: Two and a half years after the fateful Hungarian and Polish "Octobers," the two countries present what is in many respects a study in contrasts: Having lost some of the freedoms gained in 1956—not necessarily, as Mr. Brzezinski demonstrates in his article, because of "Soviet pressure" but because of the inherent imperatives of "Gomulkaism" itself—Poland is still by far the most unorthodox and independent of all countries in the Soviet orbit; and Gomulka's "road to socialism" still departs in several important respects from that of "the first country of socialism," the USSR. In Hungary, the situation is altogether different. The period of brutal suppression, of mass executions and purges, is over—but new kinds and forms of pressure have taken their place. Mr. Ignotus addresses himself particularly to the intellectuals, now the target of a contradictory mixture of threats *vs.* blandishments, of repression *vs.* concession. The aim is obvious: it is to turn the artist into the propagandist, to convert him from his traditional role as spokesman for the people *vs.* authority, into a spokesman for the authoritarian regime.

For an overall assessment of the Polish situation in the first "post-October" year, the reader is referred to four articles under the title "Report on Poland" (May-June 1958). For a comprehensive report on the same period in Hungary, see "Hungary Since the Revolution," by Paul Landy (September-October 1957), and the same author's "Hungary's Defiant Intellectuals" (January-February 1958).

Gomulka's Road to Socialism

By Zbigniew Brzezinski

GOMULKA WAS THE SYMBOL, but not the architect, of the Polish October. An architect is in large part the creator of the form and content of the structure he designs; a symbol is shaped to a far greater degree by the events and purposes it is said to represent. But a symbol need not be, or remain, without positive power of its own. If it happens to be imbued with a sufficient sense of its own purposes, and if circumstances develop in such a way that the forces which promoted the symbol originally come to regard it as indispensable, it may often acquire an independent position and become a directing force. This was exactly the case with Gomulka. At the momentous Eighth Plenum of the party Central Committee in October 1956, he symbolized the aspirations of Poland; at the Third Party Congress in March 1959, he was the undisputed master of Polish political life.

The diverse aspirations of October and the conflicting hopes of his varied followers obscured for a while a basic fact essential to an understanding of Gomulka—that he is, first of all, a convinced Marxist-Leninist. Born (in 1905) the son of a disaffected peasant who had emigrated to America only to return disappointed to Poland, Gomulka was active from his youth in Communist movements. They were to him both a school and a profession; his formal education ended at the age of 14, and Marxism-Leninism thus became his only perspective from which to view, and eventually to shape, reality. This does not mean that in every instance Gomulka acted strictly on the basis of doctrinal precepts. He repeatedly showed a keen sense of political realism and an undogmatic elas-

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ticity. Marxism-Leninism, however, provided all his conceptual tools and his sense of commitment. It gave him a broad doctrinal perspective which dictated the ultimate goal, served as a key to interpreting the unfolding course of history, and necessitated as well as justified certain actions as both inevitable and good. An ideology which inspires a sense of self-righteousness tied to historical inevitability can exert an enduring attraction, particularly for the self-educated. (It is curious to note a strong parallel in this respect between Gomulka and Khrushchev.)

The Bases of "Gomulkaism"

In seeking to discover the essence of Gomulka's political thinking, one finds several themes which he has reiterated frequently and which would appear to form the core of his conceptions. To bring out their striking continuity, it may be useful to compare his pre-1949 formulations on these key issues with his statements on the same points made after October 1956.[1] First of all, one finds the firm belief that communism can be built only if there is monolithic unity of the laboring class around a Marxist movement:

1947—**. . . the working class can perform its historical mission of reconstructing societal relations . . . only when it is monolithic, when it utilizes in its struggle the unconquerable weapon of Marxism. . . .**[2]

1957—**The indispensable condition for the overthrow of bourgeois power and for the construction of socialism is the direction of these processes by the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class.**[3]

Gomulka reiterated this theme on many occasions after October 1956, even before there was any new Soviet pressure for a stiffening of the Polish party line. Similarly, not even his own long incarceration (1951-54) brought any change in his view that internal violence is indispensable and that the secret police organs therefore perform a positive function:

1946—**The security organs as a whole are healthy and very dedicated in their work, and as such we will defend them against all unjustified and false accusations. For the security organs are a sharp weapon in the hands of Polish democracy in the struggle against reaction. We will not allow this tool to be wrenched from us.**[4]

1956—**The public security employees have proven that, together with the whole party and all progressive forces in our country, they stand unflinchingly on guard over the interests of the nation, that they wholeheartedly support changes in our life, and that they are ready to prevent any attempt aimed against the political line mapped out by the leadership of the party.**[5]

Gomulka did concede, however, that there is a point at which violence becomes a negative manifestation, and that it is no longer a major requirement following the defeat of "reaction." Still, its use to defend the party's monopoly of power was a right which the regime must continue to reserve.

In regard to the central issue of the role of labor in a socialist state, Gomulka's approach—while proclaiming the principle of working-class rule—has been characterized all along by firm insistence that labor's real function in building socialism is to remain disciplined and to increase production. Thus, he declared in 1945:

The Plenum [of the Central Committee] has been sharply against the relaxation of labor discipline among the working class and against all sorts of harmful tendencies to limit the scope of the authority of factory directors. Without raising labor productivity, no one can improve the welfare of the working class.[6]

After October 1956, Gomulka's attitude toward the many spontaneously formed workers' councils which had backed him during the critical period of the bloodless revolution was one of suspicion and caution—the natural reaction of a Leninist intent upon protecting the political monopoly of the party. Accordingly, he warned that "the workers' councils are not organs of the political power of the laboring class . . . [nor] links in the administrative apparatus of the people's state."[7] Outlining the scope of their legitimate activity, he pointedly stressed only social - economic - productive goals.[8]

Anti-Stalinist Principles

Thus, the post-October Gomulka still held to his earlier beliefs in the key role of the party, the desirability of its monopoly of power, and the necessity of

[1] For an excellent comparative treatment, see J. Nowak's "Analysis of Developments in Poland since October 1956," (Radio Free Europe, mimeographed, June 1958).

[2] W. Gomulka, *W Walce o Demokracje Ludowa,* (In the Struggle for a People's Democracy), Warsaw 1947, Vol. 2, p. 260.

[3] W. Gomulka, *Przemowienia,* (Speeches), Warsaw, 1957, p. 271.

[4] *W Walce . . . , op. cit.,* Vol. 2, p. 24.

[5] *Przemowienia, op. cit.,* p. 86.

[6] *W Walce,* Vol. 1, pp. 163, 185.

[7] *Przemowienia,* p. 272.

[8] *Ibid.,* pp. 278-283.

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preserving the right and capacity to resort to occasional, "justified" violence; and he was suspicious of any reforms which might weaken the party's hold on power. At the same time, however, his orthodoxy in these respects was balanced by his unchanged adherence to other earlier views which had kept him from pliantly adjusting to Stalinism. These views, which he firmly restated after 1956, concerned above all the issue of agrarian policy, the specifics of the Polish situation, and particularly Polish-Soviet relations. Gomulka seems to have long entertained the opinion that socialist construction is a long and complicated process requiring not merely Stalinist determination but also simple human patience. In 1945, he warned:

The way to socialism is not short, nor can it be shortened. . . . It would be a gross over-simplification to claim that a turn of such fundamental importance to Poland can be completely understood and accepted by the totality of all classes immediately, from one day to the next.[9]

This counsel applied with particular relevance to the Polish peasantry, steeped in tradition and religion, land-hungry, and fearful of socialism which to them meant collectivization. Although Gomulka never explicitly rejected collectivization outright, he went far in stressing those peculiarities of the Polish situation which, in his belief, made its adoption in Poland during the phase of "people's democracy" unacceptable:

1946— **. . . we have not the slightest need to follow in the footsteps of Soviet agrarian policy. *We have rejected collectivization because in the Polish condition it would be harmful economically and politically.***[10]

1956—**The road to setting up a vast network of cooperative farms in Poland's countryside is a long one. A quantitative development of producers' cooperatives cannot be planned because, on the basis of voluntary entry into the cooperatives, this would be tantamount to planning the growth of human consciousness, and that cannot be done.**[11]

Gomulka's objections to immediate and rapid collectivization for Poland were grounded on a more general insistence upon the differences between Polish and Soviet revolutionary conditions, a position which was not acceptable to Stalin after 1948 and still was only half-heartedly endorsed by the Khrushchev leadership after 1956. He stressed that one of the specific "objective" factors of the Polish scene which had to be considered was intense Polish nationalism. To ignore it, he maintained, was to commit an error in the evaluation of reality unworthy of a true Marxist-Leninist; on the other hand, to recognize nationalism was not to become a "national Communist," even if it might temporarily appear so to those who saw only the surface of things. Gomulka argued that a truly Marxist-Leninist policy for the construction of socialism must recognize such domestic specifics and at the same time respect the autonomy of the particular Communist Party concerned to choose the best methods of coping with them. In other words, equality and independence must be the basis of interparty relations if nationalism was to be successfully overcome.

GOMULKA'S VIEWS on this crucial issue also have undergone no change. Thus, in 1946, he pointed to three crucial characteristics of the Russian Revolution which, in his opinion, were absent in Poland—the background of Tsarist oppression, the less advanced state of Russian capitalism in 1917-20, and foreign intervention;[12] eleven years later he repeated these observations in his address to the Ninth Plenum of the party Central Committee.[13] Again, Gomulka in 1946 bluntly termed it a "basic error" of the party that it "underestimated the matter of [national] independence,"[14] a theme which he reunderlined in a 1957 statement published in *Pravda:*

. . . a particular trait formed [in the Polish people] in the course of their historical development as a result of age-long foreign oppression and deprivation of freedom . . . is their special sensitivity to questions affecting their country's independence and sovereignty. The underestimation or denial of national traits and peculiarities in the building of socialism is nihilistic dogmatism. . . .[15]

But in stressing the need for a proper balance between these profound national specifics and universal requisites, Gomulka made it quite clear that he did not view independence and diversity as ends in themselves, but rather as the necessary, enduring pre-conditions for building true international unity and for the domestic construction of socialism. National autonomy must be respected, in his belief, not in order to enshrine independence and nationalism, but to create a climate which will facilitate their eventual transition into higher Communist brotherhood.

The pattern of political development in Poland since October 1956 becomes more meaningful when considered within the framework of these continuities in

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[9] *W Walce,* Vol. 1, p. 155.
[10] *W Walce,* Vol. 2, p. 162 (italics in original).
[11] *Przemowienia,* pp. 33-34.
[12] *W Walce . . .* , Vol. 2, p. 156.
[13] *Przemowienia,* pp. 264-271.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 126.
[15] *Pravda,* November 5, 1957.

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Gomulka's thinking. Indeed, the only new element of importance to appear in his thinking in the post-1956 period—his insistence upon due regard for the Polish Catholic tradition—clearly derives from his long-held general position that in order to change the popular consciousness in Poland, the specific factors shaping that consciousness must be properly appraised. In Gomulka's judgment, the policies of the Stalinist period only served to intensify religious feeling and to "set millions of believers against the People's Government."[16] Adjustment of these policies, therefore, was not only desirable from the tactical standpoint, but a necessary concession which would facilitate Poland's march toward socialism.

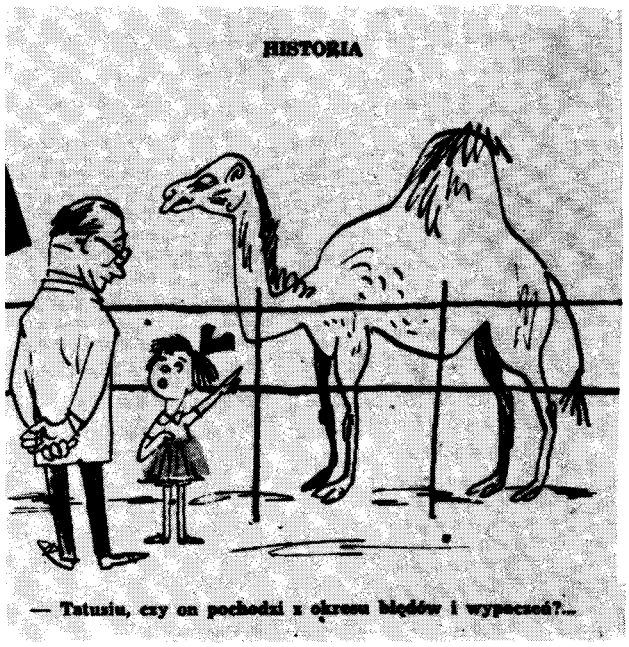
Post-October Quest for Balance

Such, in brief, were the basic patterns of thought with which Gomulka returned to power in 1956. They were, to be sure, characterized by tactical elasticity, but in substance they had little in common with social democracy or revisionism. Before they could be translated into a concrete Polish road to socialism, moreover, they had to survive a confrontation with post-revolutionary political realities, largely the product of the semi-anarchy that followed in the wake of the October upheaval. A "Gomulkaist" Poland began to emerge only with the restoration of political control after Gomulka, at the Central Committee Plenums in 1957 and 1958, gained the confidence of the party apparatus and succeeded in isolating both the neo-Stalinist "dogmatists" and the liberal revisionists.

The consolidation of his political authority brought Gomulka's road to socialism for Poland into sharper focus mainly by making it possible for him to eliminate those gains of the October revolution which did not enjoy his favor. Sometimes described as Leninism applied to Polish conditions, Gomulkaism has involved an attempt to water down Stalinism's impatient reliance on pure force and to achieve a balance between purposeful coercion and an automatic, gradual change in social consciousness. The nature of this balance could not be spelled out in advance with any degree of precision, and practice has consequently been the sole clue to its content.

First of all, there has been a noticeable retightening of party ideological controls. The party's theoretical organ, *Nowe Drogi,* flatly declared in its January 1958 issue ("A Few Remarks on the Leading Role of the United Polish Workers' Party") that "the party can

[16] *Przemowienia,* p. 305.



HISTORY

—Daddy, does he descend from the era of errors and distortions?

—*From* Szpilki *(Warsaw), November 21, 1958*

and ought to lead everything." During 1957-58 there was a particularly conspicuous retightening of censorship controls in the ideological sector, with the regime suppressing about 50 percent of the articles submitted for publication in such discussion journals as *Nowa Kultura* and *Przeglad Kulturalny.*[17] In October 1957 the party announced that permanent commissions of the Central Committee for the control of science, culture and education—abolished a year earlier—were to be recreated;[18] and a party spokesman explicitly affirmed that Poland must have a "cultural policy which promotes the objectives of its system and ideology."[19] Gomulka's frequent expressions of suspicion toward the intellectuals—paralleling similar utterances by Khrushchev—presumably were not irrelevant to these measures. Even though tardy in stepping forth with its program, the regime made it plain that open discussion of ideological alternatives would no longer be tolerated.

The reactivation of firm party rule also meant gradual restriction of the significant right of free political association and quiet reconstruction of the secret police apparatus. The various intellectual clubs marked by

[17] As stated by A. Werblan in his secret speech to the Central Committee's Press Commission, May 6, 1958.

[18] *Trybuna Ludu,* October 17, 1957.

[19] *Ibid.,* October 21, 1957, (Prof. A. Schaff).

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revisionist tendencies disappeared for the most part, and the few that survived in the largest urban centers were forbidden to organize a formal national assembly.[20] Even the 60-odd non-party members of the *Sejm* (parliament) were not permitted to form a parliamentary club, and early in 1958 political control was reimposed on the resuscitated boy scout movement and the veterans' association. The secret police, incorporated earlier into the Ministry of Interior, underwent reorganization into nine departments within the ministry, each assigned to a particular sphere such as supervision over intellectuals, over former underground fighters, etc. The paring down of the police apparatus through dismissals was halted, its strength as of mid-1957 being reliably estimated at 21,000 men.[21] In November 1957 Gomulka's Minister of Interior publicly stressed the need for security operations to combat "the reactivation of groups which can be traced to forbidden political parties or reactionary organizations."[22]

Curbing Labor and the Church

In the sphere of labor, the authority of the workers' councils, which by the fall of 1957 had been established in 1,492 out of 1,936 eligible industrial enterprises,[23] was severely circumscribed in April 1958 by the superimposition of so-called Workers' Self-government Conferences. On these new bodies, set up for each enterprise, the representatives of the workers' councils are outnumbered by those of the trade unions and party cells, the secretary of the party cell acting as chairman of the conference for any given enterprise.[24] Under the new set-up, the councils have become essentially grievance boards, although they still are of some importance in articulating the views of the working class. Parallel with this, the regime has tightened labor discipline by imposing limitations upon the right to strike.[25]

A special problem which Gomulka had to face in 1957-58 was that of state-church relations. The *modus vivendi* he entered into with the Church in October 1956 was clearly an emergency solution which could not endure once the party had regained the initiative. The top party leadership had little desire to return to the Stalinist policy of forcible suppression explicitly condemned by Gomulka, but at the same time there was a growing fear that the expanding scope of the Church's social activities—such as the organization of pilgrimages by professional groups (doctors, lawyers, etc.), the assignment of chaplains to boy scout units, the activity of "worker-priests" among labor, and the formation of Catholic clubs in the universities—represented an institutional challenge which the regime could not long afford to tolerate. By early 1958 the latter felt strong enough to launch a press campaign against alleged Church infractions of the existing agreements, and there have since been occasional trials of priests on charges of violating the "tolerance clause" of the Polish constitution (by refusing, for example, to permit burial of an active Communist in a Catholic cemetery), as well as a tightening of state controls over clerics assigned to teaching religion in the schools.

There has been another special, unpublicized motivation behind the increased vigor of the party's campaign against the Church. The party leadership had become greatly concerned over the general decline in "revolutionary zeal," and especially over the widespread passivity revealed by the purges to have developed in the ranks of the party. It therefore decided to make use of the anti-Church campaign as a means of unifying the party membership and, at the same time, of undercutting the dogmatists' opposition to Gomulka. This has, indeed, been frankly acknowledged within party circles even though not generally publicized.[26]

Moscow and Gomulka's New Approach

The foregoing discussion points to the conclusion that the retrogression which took place in Poland during 1957-58, and which is still continuing, did not occur merely as a consequence of external Soviet pressure. Such pressure doubtless was present; indeed, it was openly manifested by Moscow's criticisms of many aspects of the Polish scene in contrast to its praises of other Communist states following more orthodox policies, and by its subsequent approbation of the retrogressive measures described above. Nevertheless, both the dynamics of one-party rule and Gomulka's own specific views regarding the construction of socialism would have required curtailment of the freedoms won in October 1956, even without any outside pressure. Thus the question is really not whether the retrogressive domestic

[20] At the end of 1957, their number was estimated at about 20. (ORKA, Sept. 29, 1957).

[21] Nowak, *op cit.*, pp. 57-58.

[22] *Trybuna Ludu*, November 13, 1957.

[23] *Glos Pracy*, September 20, 1957.

[24] *Rada Robotnicza*, No. 12, June 18-20, 1958; for the negative reaction of the workers' councils, see *Glos Pracy*, June 17, 1958.

[25] Speech by Gomulka, *Glos Pracy*, April 18, 1958.

[26] Confirmed to the writer by a highly placed member of the Central Committee; explicitly asserted at the 12th Plenum in October 1958 by W. Matwin, as recorded on p. 44 of an edited stenographic report intended solely for internal party use.

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policies currently in force were a response to Soviet pressure, but rather to what extent they were promoted or handicapped by it.

To this question no clear-cut answer can be given. In one sense, external pressure was indispensable to Gomulka inasmuch as, without the USSR behind him, he could not have carried on. But even if this proposition is granted, it is also possible to construe Soviet pressure as having handicapped Gomulka's domestic policy insofar as the very presence of an all-powerful Soviet partner so near to Poland continually forced him to pay greater heed to domestic aspirations in order to gain and maintain national backing. Thus, it is a plausible, if somewhat curious, paradox that the same external pressures for unity and hierarchy which Gomulka resisted for the sake of preserving his own autonomy *vis-à-vis* Moscow helped make it possible for him to translate his own version of Communist orthodoxy into domestic policy.

However, just as the retrogression in Poland has fundamentally reflected Gomulka's growing power and not mere Soviet interference, so has the consolidation of certain tangible achievements of the Polish October reflected a new political approach on the part of the Warsaw leadership. Despite pointed Soviet praise of those Communist states which are proceeding with agricultural collectivization, further collectivization in Poland appears to be postponed indefinitely—or at least until such time as it becomes economically more attractive. The number of collective farms has stabilized at about 1700-1800, and the burden shouldered by the peasants in the form of obligations to the state has been substantially lightened.

In another area, local government has been reformed to encourage greater popular participation. This has necessarily involved a partial attenuation of direct party control and a more active role on the local level for the two subordinate non-Communist parties embraced in the National Front. In the *Sejm* also, although the outcome of any parliamentary vote is still predetermined by the existence of the artificially maintained Communist majority, the transparent practice of enacting every measure by unanimous vote has been abandoned, committees have been allowed a more active and important part in the discussion of legislative issues, and interpellations have been introduced.[27]

Despite the retightening of censorship controls, the press has remained lively and undogmatic, occasionally taking issue with Soviet criticisms of the Polish scene and carrying a relatively substantial volume of news coverage and other stories about the West. The universities, which were freed from practically all political control following the October revolution, have retained most of their internal academic freedom, although subjected to increasing restrictions on publications, particularly in the sensitive area of the social sciences. The leading revisionists remain at liberty even if under pressure from the regime to desist in their "deviations."

Finally, even in those spheres where a distinct retrogression did occur, there has nowhere been a full return to the Stalinist past. The sense of national liberation evoked by the October revolution has perforce lost some of its exhilaration, but it has not faded completely. The political climate and style of living have changed profoundly. Fear of terror is a thing of the past, and the chasm which formerly separated political authority from the people at large has been appreciably narrowed.

Gomulka-Khrushchev Axis?

Along with the consolidation of "Gomulkaism" at home, a distinct improvement in Polish-Soviet relations took place in 1958. Gomulka's domestic policies as well as his position on revisionism seemed to vindicate Khrushchev's "confidence" in him, and presumably were gratifying to the latter's self-esteem. At the same time, the greater rigidity demonstrated by other Communist leaders—and even, it seems, by the Chinese—helped to create a feeling among the Polish Communists that Khrushchev was the only leader with whom they could bargain.

This certainly seemed to be the case during Gomulka's protracted visit to the USSR in October-November 1958. He was received with demonstrative cordiality by Khrushchev, and then, accompanied by the entire Polish delegation, including Cyrankiewicz and Zawadzki, traveled to the major cities of the USSR. If the reports about the suspicion entertained by numerous high-ranking Soviet party functionaries toward Gomulka are to be trusted, his trip could be interpreted as a coordinated effort (presumably backed by Khrushchev) to "sell" the Polish leadership to the Soviet *apparatchiki.* It is interesting, for example, that Gomulka went out of his way to assure the various Union Republic leaders and members of the Central Committee of his fundamental commitment to the common cause, while also pleading the need to understand the special characteristics of the Polish situation.

Gomulka further strengthened his link with Moscow

[27] Between 1952 and 1955 only one interpellation had been made. In 1957, 51 interpellations were introduced, only 11 of them by Communist Party members. (*Trybuna Ludu,* November 12, 1957).

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first by attacking, on numerous occasions, revisionism and Yugoslavia, and secondly, by adopting a more deferential attitude toward the Soviet Union's position in the Communist bloc. Although just a few months earlier he had still adhered to his own preferred term—"first and mightiest"—in referring to Russia's position among the Communist states,[28] he now devised a new formulation which was more submissive if somewhat vague. The Soviet Union now became the "foremost" socialist state—a term which the Soviet press at first mistranslated as "leading" or "directing," but subsequently rendered more accurately.[29]

In return for these concessions, Gomulka obtained, in the joint Polish-Soviet declaration, a condemnation of "dogmatism" (*i.e.,* Stalinism) as well as revisionism, and a solid reaffirmation of Soviet support for the Oder-Neisse frontier. It was clear that the Poles had to pay the higher price for the *rapprochement,* but at the same time their concessions served—paradoxically enough—to consolidate Gomulka's position both at home and within the entire Communist camp. This was demonstrated at the 21st CPSU Congress in January of this year, at which Gomulka was hailed as one of the world's foremost Communist leaders. Possibly also for his benefit, Khrushchev declared that the CPSU's "headship" of the camp is essentially a recognition of its historical role and of its strength, and that it has no other implications. Indeed, something remotely resembling the old Khrushchev-Tito axis seemed to be taking shape in Gomulka's relations with Khrushchev.

Poland Today and Tomorrow

As a result Gomulka could turn with added confidence to the task of liquidating the remnants of the neo-Stalinist faction in the Polish party. He did so at the 12th Party Plenum in December 1958, during which the remnants of the old Natolin faction, led by second-stringers such as the economist E. Szyr and the *apparatchik* B. Ruminski, attempted to attack the party's economic plan for 1959-65 on the ground that it envisaged an insufficiently rapid development of socialism in Poland. According to a stenographic report intended for internal party use, much of the argument against the plan was based on the Chinese experience—an analogy which Gomulka and his associates could easily reject on grounds of irrelevancy. S. Jedrychowski, a prominent party planner and Politburo member, firmly concluded his rebuttal by stating: "Our pace of economic development should be defined by ourselves on the basis of our own, most conscientious appraisal of our conditions, needs and possibilities. . . ."[30] Another Politburo member, A. Zawadzki, went so far as to voice the thought not only that the Chinese example does not prove (as Szyr argued) that changes in social consciousness can outpace changes in social conditions, but that "the example of China is not entirely convincing" because it is dubious that the Chinese masses have really been won to communism.[31]

The 12th Plenum saw the last outburst of collective opposition to Gomulka. By way of contrast, the Third Congress was almost dull in its repeated endorsements of Gomulka; the Soviet delegation, including as many as three CPSU Presidium members, was unstinting in its support of the First Secretary; and the new Central Committee was rigorously purged of the remaining neo-Stalinist deviants. In a symbolic gesture, the 1949 condemnation of Gomulka was stricken from the party records. Gomulkaism was now registered in the sacred rolls of orthodoxy.

The Congress, however, avoided any ideological definition of "Golmulkaism" and restricted its relevance to Poland alone. In explicitly rejecting any claims to

[28] The differences in formulation between the Polish and other East European Communist leaders is striking: *i.e.,* in Sofia: Gomulka's version: ". . . the Soviet Union, the first and most powerful socialist country . . ." (*Trybuna Ludu,* May 9, 1958) Zhivkov: ". . . the great peace-loving socialist family, headed by the first and most powerful socialist country in the world, the Soviet Union . . ." (*Radio Sofia,* May 8, 1958) In Budapest: Gomulka: ". . . the Soviet Union, first and most powerful socialist country . . ." (*Trybuna Ludu,* May 13, 1958). Kadar: "with the Soviet Union at the head . . ." (*Trybuna Ludu,* May 11, 1958). In Bucharest: Gomulka: ". . . the Soviet Union, the first and most powerful socialist country . . ." (*Trybuna Ludu,* May 15, 1958). Georgiu-Dej: ". . . the unshakable unity of the socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union . . ." (*Radio Bucharest,* May 13, 1958).

[29] The Polish word used by Gomulka was *czolowe,* which means foremost, frontal. *Pravda* (October 18, 1958) translated it as *vedushcheie,* which has a connotation of leadership, but on October 25th the paper adopted the more correct rendering of *peredovoie,* which essentially implies a sequence-relationship, although it could also be construed as implying a position of leadership. The same ambiguity prevailed in December 1958 when the East German delegation visited Warsaw. Gomulka again referred to the USSR as the "foremost" *(czolowe)* socialist state (*Trybuna Ludu,* December 14, 1958) which *Neues Deutschland* immediately rendered as "leading" *(fuehrend).* The same variety prevailed in the joint declaration: the Polish version used "forerunning" or *przodujace* (*Trybuna Ludu,* December 16, 1958), while the German again used "leading" or *fuehrend* (*Neues Deutschland,* same date). At the Third Congress, Gomulka again used the "foremost" version.

[30] Confidential transcript, *XII Plenum Komitetu Centralnego,* Central Committee, Warsaw, 1958.

[31] *Ibid.*

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universality, Gomulka was clearly attempting to mollify any remaining Soviet fears, while implicitly undermining the relevance of specific foreign [*i.e.* Soviet] experience to Poland. But if this tactic was shrewd in the short run, it could not but contribute to the emergence of a host of complications for the future. The outstanding problems confronting Gomulka, such as relations with the Church, the deterioration of public morale, the alienation and frustration of the intellectuals, the loss of the allegiance of youth (a particularly serious problem for a regime led by aging products of Stalinism),[32] and the weakness of the collective movement in the countryside, all pose ultimate ideological issues which cannot be avoided indefinitely unless the party is implicitly to adopt the proposition of "spontaneity," of "automation" in social change, which clearly it cannot. In agriculture, for instance, the gradual process of splintering of land-holdings, inherent in peasant ownership, is bound to produce eventual pressures for some radical change, especially when it begins to affect agricultural productivity, while the nationwide demographic upsurge will eventually pose the prospect of large-scale unemployment both in the countryside and in the cities. To mobilize support and generate fresh revolutionary élan, the party must be imbued with a sense of purpose at once vital and explicit. Muddling along on the silent understanding that it is necessary to avoid foreign interference obviously does not constitute a solution of the problem.

THE POLISH ROAD to socialism is based on Gomulka's recognition of Polish national peculiarities, on the specifics of the Polish agrarian scene and the rugged political and social individualism of the Polish peasant, on the more advanced state of industrialization in Poland than at the comparable stage of "socialist development" in Russia, on a close alliance with the USSR involving external but not domestic subordination to it, and on domestic autonomy without external ideological ambitions. It is thus not comparable to Tito's "national communism" or even to China's indigenous Communist regime. At the same time, Poland's efforts to maintain a measure of autonomy *vis-à-vis* the USSR, despite domestic weakness, result in a degree of moderation which has not characterized either Mao Tse-tung, or Tito in his revolutionary period.

Nevertheless, these considerations must not obscure the fact that internally Gomulka's Poland is a Communist-ruled state which is gradually creeping toward, and not away from, communism. This direction cannot be maintained without the presence of the USSR, no matter how much *direct* Soviet interference in Polish internal affairs is opposed by Gomulka *et al.* Therein lie the paradox and the inherent weakness of Gomulkaism. In the meantime, however, there is in this obvious instability an element of negative strength, one that both Moscow and the Poles seem to recognize—namely that in Poland today no workable political alternative to Gomulkaism exists.

[32] *E.g.*, the reactivated party youth movement by the end of 1957 numbered only 90,000 members including "several thousand" students. In the Warsaw Polytechnic, for instance, there were 12 members out of a student body of 14,000. (*Sztandar Mlodych,* Oct. 23, Dec. 10, 1957). Furthermore, even a rapid increase in their numbers would not be a resolution of the profound problem of ideological skepticism and rejection of Marxism, strikingly revealed by public opinion polls (in this writer's possession). Especially distressing was the sharp decline in the number of party members of 25 years of age or less. In 1955, 15.9 percent of the party's membership was in that category; in 1956, 13 percent; 1957, 10 percent; 1958, 6.8 percent. (*Nowe Drogi,* December 1958).

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Hungarian Intellectuals under Fire

By Paul Ignotus

POETS AND WRITERS have always played an unusually important role in Hungarian public life. A look into history provides the explanation. Generally ruled by veiled dictatorships, or at best by narrowly based parliamentary regimes, Hungarians have almost always found their freedom of political expression tightly circumscribed. Literature has thus offered an outlet and a forum where political institutions usually have failed. Ever since March 15, 1848, when the people of Pest under the leadership of the young poet Sandor Petoefi overthrew Austrian absolutism and Hungarian feudalism, Hungarians of all classes have periodically sought "new Petoefis" for guidance.

The revolutionary events of 1956 were very much in the established tradition.[1] During the whole period of the "thaw," as well as during the uprising and the resistance to the Soviet Army, the Hungarian writers were recognized as the spokesmen for the large masses of the population. Paradoxically, they owed much of their powers of leadership to the Stalinist rulers who, in the hope of using the prestige of the intellectuals for their own purposes, had granted the writers important posts and the right to form professional organizations (especially the Hungarian Writers' Union). This is the reason why the leading roles in the events of 1956 were played by two categories of writers who during the years of Stalinist rule had been allowed relatively most freedom, *i.e.,* the Communist Party members and the Populists (of whom more below).

The events of 1956 strikingly demonstrated the regime's failure to cajole the Hungarian writers into Communist conformity. The reluctance of men of letters to comply with Communist demands remained a dominant feature of the Hungarian scene even in 1957, after the Kadar regime, imposed by Soviet arms, had consolidated its power.[2] Most of those writers who were not put in prison engaged in a sit-down strike, for many months refusing to produce any work at all. In order to conceal their massive resistance from the general public, the government proceeded to publish manuscripts that had been sent to the printers before the revolution. This accounts for the ironic fact that a great part of the literature published in Hungary in 1957—that is, at the time when the wave of political imprisonments was reaching its peak—still reflected the thaw atmosphere.

Since then the Kadar regime has tried hard to allay the tensions in Hungarian political life, and official pressure has thus become more "ideological" and less "administrative" in nature. The writers' opposition is manifest today in omissions rather than commissions, but the conflict between them and the party continues. The scene, indeed, gives the impression of an approaching showdown.

Revisionists and other Non-conformists

As an aftermath of the Hungarian revolution, revisionism has emerged as the cardinal political sin in the countries under Khrushchev's and Mao's leadership. The sinners in Hungary have suffered particularly heavy blows. Some of the Hungarian Communists and former Communists imprisoned in 1957, such as the journalist Tibor Tardos, the poet Zoltan Zelk, and the literary historian Domokos Varga (all of whom were reported to have suffered physical or mental breakdowns in prison), have since been released. But most of the important personalities, like the great novelist Tibor Dery, the playwright Gyula Hay, the playwright József Gali, and the

[1] For a detailed account of the subject see the author's article, "Revolution of the World", *Encounter* (London), April 1957.

Mr. Ignotus, author of "The AVH; Symbol of Terror," which appeared in the September-October 1957 issue of this journal, is a distinguished Hungarian writer and journalist who, in the 1930's, was associated with the literary group referred to in this article as "Urbanizers." Imprisoned by the Rakosi regime between September 1949 and March 1956, he played a leading role in the literary "thaw" which preceded the revolution and fled the country in November. Since March 1957, he has headed the Hungarian Writers' Association Abroad.

[2] See P. Landy: "Hungary's Defiant Intellectuals," *Problems of Communism,* Vol. VII, No. 1 (January-February, 1958).

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journalist Gyula Obersovszky (the latter two the editors of the now defunct periodical *Igazsag* [Truth]), or the poet Istvan Eörsi (who should be included in this category because of his strongly leftist leanings, even though he had not actually been a Communist), are still imprisoned. Many of the men killed or incarcerated with Imre Nagy were also men of letters, mainly journalists. Among the most prominent of these, Miklos Gimes was executed, Geza Losonczy "died in prison before being sentenced," and Sandor Haraszti and Miklos Vasarhelyi remain in prison.

Of the acts of revenge against the revisionists the most recent is the case of five young intellectuals, most of them former leading members of the Petoefi Club. Their secret trial began on March 23 of this year, and the sentences, without any details of the trial, were officially announced on April 1. Professor Ferenc Mèrei, psychologist and educator, was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment; Sandor Fekete, journalist and literary critic, to nine years; György Litvan, schoolmaster and historian, to six years; Jeno Szel, ethnographer and former diplomat, to five years; and Andras Hegedus (no relative of the former Stalinist premier), a secretary of the Petoefi Club and a leader of the People's Colleges Movement, to two years. (Gabor Tanczos, former Secretary General of the Petoefi Club, had already been sentenced before, and Laszlo Kardos, former Director of the People's Colleges, had committed suicide in prison.) All of them are men of value and courage. Merei is well known for his scientific achievements, Fekete has been considered one of the most promising young journalists, and Litvan became famous early in 1956 for his courage in attacking the Communist dictator Rakosi in the latter's presence.

Among the imprisoned progressive, non-Communist men of letters, the most important is Professor Istvan Bibo, a legal historian, who served in the last Imre Nagy coalition government as a representative of the Petoefi Peasant Party, but who has always been considered a political essayist rather than a politician. The marked hostility against his person is due to his public appeal for a "compromise"—made after the suppression of the revolution by the Soviet Army—the terms of which made allowance for special Soviet interests on Hungarian territory, but refused to recognize the Soviet-imposed government as legal.[3] He has been in jail since June 1957 but his sentence to life imprisonment, passed in the autumn of 1958, was not announced until last Christmas.

Other imprisoned scholars are the historian, Professor Domokos Kosary (non-party), an enlightened conservative, released once but re-arrested, with a sentence unknown; and Professor Gyorgy Adam, an economist and former Communist, who had been imprisoned for five years under Rakosi and who now has been given a life sentence. The famous philosopher, Professor Gyorgy Lukacs, was allowed to come back from his internment in Rumania; in spite of the increasingly violent official campaign against him, he has not been prosecuted and is being allowed (or compelled) to take a nominal part in literary and scholarly life.

Populists and Urbanizers

The current ideological drive of the Kadar regime against the non-conformist writers is reflected in three long documents issued during the past year by Communist Party authorities. The principal targets of the campaign, besides the revisionist Communist writers, are two Hungaran literary groups known as the Populists and the Urbanizers.

The Populists, or Folkwriters *(nepi irok),* represent a political and literary movement which was first launched some forty years ago, after the founding of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. Its membership during the prewar years was about equally divided between poets, fiction writers, agronomists and journalists, most of them in their thirties. They were united in their will to explore the state of affairs in Hungarian rural districts ("village explorers," many of them were called), with the idea of solving Hungarian social and cultural problems by reliance on what they regarded as the characteristics of the "pure Hungarian peasant stock."

Their party allegiances before and during World War II were variegated. The agronomist Matyas Matolcsy, for instance, ended his career as a radio propagandist for the Nazis, and the poet Jozsef Erdelyi sided with the Arrow-Cross Fascists; others, such as Ferenc Erdei and Jozsef Darvas, both of whom later became cabinet ministers and Stalinist stooges, sympathized with the extreme left, acting presumably on Communist Party orders. Most Populists, however, refused to endorse either Hitlerism or Stalinism, even though their attitudes may have reflected now and then some sympathy for either one or for both of these ideologies. Their most powerful writers—the poet, novelist and village explorer, Gyula Illyes; the novelist-essayist-playwright Laszlo Nemeth; the Transylvanian novelist Aron Tamasi, as well as the two well-known Populist writers now in the West, Imre Kovacs and Zoltan Szabo—succeeded in resisting the temptation of both these extremes. For all of them, however, their common Populist ties were more important than their occasional ideological differences. The whole

[3]The full text has been published in several languages; the authentic Hungarian text is in *Irodalmi Ujsag* (now published as an émigré organ in London), Oct. 1, 1958.

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movement, though often concentrating on practical economic issues (land reform), was imbued with a Hungarian blend of the Blood and Soil mystique, most characteristically expressed perhaps by the peasant writer Peter Veres, who aimed at a "synthesis of dialectical materialism and Turanian [not Aryan] racialism."

The Populists in inter-war Hungary fought on two fronts. They were of course disliked and sometimes persecuted by the parties and authorities siding with the great landlords. But ranged against them with even more acerbity was also a group of fellow-writers and reformers, usually referred to in Hungarian literature as the Urbanizers *(urbanusok),* who in contemporary Western terminology would be identified with the "non-Communist left." The Urbanizers were willing to side with the Populists in their attacks on feudal remnants, but not in their nationalist or racist mystique. Among them there were Social Democrats who, after renouncing their juvenile excursions into communism, still preserved much of their Marxist leaning (*e.g.,* the great poet Attila Jozsef and the historian and literary essayist Ferenc Fejto); Liberal Republicans (Bela Zsolt, Zoltan Gaspar, Geza K. Havas); Liberal Royalists (Baron Bertalan Hatvany); and left-wing Catholics (the poet Bela Horvath).

The attitude of the Communists to these groups has always been determined by political expediency. Until 1935 they attacked them all. After the inception of the Popular Front they tried to capture their allegiance, though discriminating between the two groups for purposes of political planning. The party of course had its own preconceived ideas, based on Leninist dogmas, about classifying literary trends as well as social forces. The Urbanizers were thus "petty bourgeois," and the Populists were associated with the "peasantry"; of the latter those showing reluctance to accept Communist "guidance" were branded as "landowning peasants imbued with bourgeois ideas," whereas those sympathetic to communism were honorably distinguished as "poor peasants." According to the Leninist timetable—revived and rearranged under the Popular Front—the proletariat, as represented by the Communist Party, was enjoined to cooperate at first on the broadest possible basis with other social classes against the extreme right; then, after gaining a commanding share of public power, the coalition partners were to be gradually eliminated, one by one. The timetable earmarked the "petty bourgeois" elements for liquidation before the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas the "poor peasantry," though "led by the working class," was to continue being represented in the Communist regime.

This attitude was clearly evident in the Communists' postwar tactics. For example, the leading Hungarian Stalinist ideologist, Jozsef Revai, showed from the onset more sympathy for the Populists than for the Urbanizers. It is true that for some time he alternately urged them to unite or warned them against each other, depending on the political exigencies of the moment. But the prevailing party tactics were revealed when he declared at the Hungarian Writers' Congress of 1951—at the height of Stalinist terror—that the greatest danger to socialist realism was the possibility of the nationalists and cosmopolitans (*i.e.,* the Populists and Urbanizers) coming to terms.

The Populist movement after the war took the shape of a political party—namely, the National Peasant Party, described (in the term then current in Hungary) as the "filiation of the Communist Party." Those of the Populists who opposed this arrangement were either silenced or driven into exile. The Urbanizers had in fact been liquidated as a group by the time of Revai's 1951 speech, with its membership largely imprisoned, in exile, or killed by Nazis or Communists. But as a result of the thaw in 1956, some of them emerged again, and in company with the revisionists and the Populists they were instrumental in turning the Hungarian Writers' Union into the real parliament of the people. Imre Nagy's coalition government reflected this development by embracing revisionist Communists, the Petoefi (formerly National) Peasant Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Smallholders' Party.

The Carrot and the Stick

The party's latterday attack against Hungary's writers was launched in a formal statement published in July 1958 by the Theoretical-Cultural Working Committee of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.[4] It addressed itself principally to the Populists, and represented another attempt to subjugate literature through the device of "divide and conquer."

The document gave a long analysis (biased of course, but based no doubt on factual research) of the interdependence of political and literary trends in Hungary since the early 1930's. It reminded the Populists once again of the sympathy shown for them by Communists at the time when both the reactionaries of the Horthy regime and the "Social Democrats and the left wing of the bourgeoisie," represented by the Urbanizers, were treating them with hostility or "lack of understanding." On the other hand, the document castigated the Populists for the fact that emigré organs—specifically the fortnightly *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Literary Gazette) and the periodical *Latohatar* (Horizon)—"consider them as the

[4] Published *i.a.* in *Kortars* (Budapest), July 1958.

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interpreters of their own [the emigrés] ideas." Their names, the party document went on, are used as shields by their one-time bourgeois opponents and by insignificant recent traitors to their country.[5] The Populists must choose between the "people" (that is, the Soviet-imposed government) and the "non-existing Third Road," which is both treacherously cosmopolitan and nationalist, and even racist. The Communists offer their brotherly hand to the Populists, but only on condition that the latter will renounce any association not only with the revisionists and the cosmopolitans but also with their own nationalist past. No attempt on their part to act as a group would be tolerated, but individually, as "former Populists" *(voltnepi irok),* they can hope to find again their places in Hungarian life.[6]

This attack on the Populist movement had such an impact on Hungarian literary life that several papers and periodicals, both in Hungary and abroad—*e.g.,* the most important literary monthly in Budapest, *Kortars* (Contemporary), and the Munich periodical *Uj Latohatar* (New Horizon)—have been dealing with the subject ever since, outdoing the party document in harshness.

Party Criminology, Old and New

The party's second widely publicized cultural document of the period, some 12,500 words in length, is entitled "The Guiding Principles of the Educational Policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party."[7] Published soon after the aforementioned paper, the pronouncement starts out with a general statement of official educational policy: youth must be brought up in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism; Communist indoctrination is of primary importance; repetition of past mistakes, whether they consisted in the "sectarianism" and "dogmatism" of the 1949-53 period, or in the tolerance of "revisionism and opportunism" of the thaw era and the October "counterrevolution," must be avoided.

The document then enumerates some of the results of Communist educational and cultural policy. The number of high school graduates increased from 33,000 in 1938 to 100,000 in 1957. Book publishing, too, has shown a marked growth: in 1938 there were 8,152 books published in 17,300,000 copies; in 1955, the figures rose respectively to 17,506 and 44,800,000. Even after making allowances for the party propaganda included in the book-publishing figure (the titles comprise such dubious "works" as five- to ten-page party pamphlets), and for the fact that intellectual curiosity (however reflected in these figures) is hardly the result of Communist "upbringing," these are noteworthy results and should not be entirely discounted by the objective observer.

On the other hand, the document admits by implication that the reading public—and notably the educators and the intellectually inclined youth—has not been won over to Marxism-Leninism. The events of 1956, it states, were mainly inspired by young educators and students (of the revisionist Petoefi Club, for instance); and young men and women in the country have ever since regarded the "counterrevolution" as their own revolutionary, heroic achievement. The document asserts revealingly:

The revisionists now lure and fool the youth by telling them that it is for youth to set the pace. They try to support these opinions by high-sounding slogans about the revolutionary drive and avant-gardism of youth . . .

When compared to similar party pronouncements put out before 1956, the most interesting change in the present statements is the revaluation of the party's political enemies. Under Rakosi's terror-rule, from 1949 until Stalin's death, the main enemies were: 1) "fascism," a label first used in charges against war criminals but later extended to include any anti-Communist elements; 2) "Titoism-Trotskyism," applied arbitrarily, for reasons of party tactics or personal struggles for power, to anyone earmarked for political destruction; 3) "social-democratism," used against practically all former Social Democratic party and trade union officials, whether they had resisted the Communist drive for a merger, or not; 4) "clericalism," employed to smear Catholic clergymen and their political supporters, whether they belonged to the right wing (personified by Cardinal Mindszenty) or to the Democratic People's Party led by Istvan Barankovich, which advocated a more elastic policy *vis-à-vis* the regime, but which went out of existence in 1948 in protest against Communist attempts to capture it. (Protestant and Jewish clergymen were also persecuted but the struggle against them was of lesser importance.)

In the present document, the nationalism of the Horthy regime and its Fascist heritage are occasionally mentioned. The term "clericalism" has almost disappeared—presumably the Catholic Church no longer figures among the main enemies. Nor does social democracy

[5] A hint at the emigré writers who were Imre Nagy's followers, such as Tamas Aczel, Tibor Meray, Endre Enczi, Gyorgy Paloczi-Horvath, Miklos Molnar, Istvan Meszairos.

[6] The document says: "History takes the Populist writers to task, and it does so now for the last time. Whom shall they follow? Shall it be the treacherous refugee camp of Pal Ignotus, Gyorgy Faludy, Laszlo Cs. Szabo, Imre Kovacs? Or shall it be the Hungarian working peasantry which defends its own cooperatives *(kolkhozi),* and the Communists who consistently stand up for the interests of the people?"

[7] *Tarsadalmi Szemle* (Social Review), the official theoretical organ of the party, July-August, 1958.

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as such. The chief bugbears are instead the revisionists. Professor Gyorgy Lukacs, the Marxist philosopher, is violently attacked:

His idea that in the epoch of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, the main controversy in the international arena is not between socialism and capitalism, or between the working class and the bourgeoisie, but between "democratism or anti-democratism," entails in fact the abandonment of class warfare. This theory is a harmful trumpcard of revisionism not only in this country but all over the world . . . and necessarily undermines the belief in party-mindedness, in our young socialist culture and in the achievements of Soviet culture.

Second to the revisionists in the list of enemies are the Populists and, as far as they still exist, the Urbanizers (including, in this context, the Social Democrats), all of whom the document blames for sympathizing with "various tendencies of bourgeois decadence, ranging from naturalism to surrealism," instead of concentrating on socialist realism.

The most remarkable aspect of this changing spectrum of party enemies is the enormous importance attributed to the intellectuals and their influence on youth. Rightly or wrongly, it is the Populist poets, the Urbanizer essayists and, above all, the revisionist Marxist philosophers, rather than the Catholic priests, who now disturb the party's peace of mind. Of all the new foes bared by the revolution the party found the worst spawning in its own midst.

A Frontal Attack on Literature

The most recent party statement on contemporary Hungarian literature, entitled "Some Problems of Hungarian Literature Since the Liberation," was published in March of this year.[8] It differs from the preceding two documents in that it extends the condemnation of specific currents of opinion to a frontal attack on present-day Hungarian literature at large. Generous tributes are paid in the document to dead writers and even to some living authors for their works of previous years. But as far as the present literary output is concerned, no writer receives the party's full approval.

The carrot-and-stick technique of last year is still in use, but the stick now looms conspicuously large. All the Populists' sins (real and alleged) are aired in great detail. Gyula Illes, for instance, is rebuked for his poem "One Sentence on Tyranny," published in the revolutionary issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag*. The leading literary review *Kortars*, though edited by two recognized fellow-travelers, Jozsef Darvas and Gabor Tolnay, is reproached for its "liberalism" in accepting Populist and kindred contributions from Laszlo Nemeth, Geza Feja and Sandor Erdei. The conformist weekly *Elet es Irodalom* (Life and Literature), edited by Gyorgy Boloni, is berated for having given too much space to "representatives of old bourgeois literature." Nonetheless the Populists are still offered forgiveness if they repent and agree to serve the regime.

To most of the revisionists, however, not even this choice is left open; they are simply branded as members of the "treacherous conspiratorial gang of Imre Nagy." The violent attack on Gyorgy Lukacs is a feature even more striking in this document than in the former.[9] The imprisoned Dery fares no better. In the second volume of his great novel, *Felelet* (Answer), he is said to have "calumniated the struggles of the party in illegality" and created "a banner for the spokesmen of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opinions.

Only a few young novelists and playwrights are credited with "representing our present-day life on the basis of working-class ideology, and depicting mainly the heroic struggle of our people against the counterrevolution of 1956." Yet it is significant that none of the writers enumerated (Andras Berkesy, Geza Molnar, Erno Urban, Istvan Fejer, Imre Dobozy, Lajos Mesterhazi, Istvan Kallai) has any standing in the young intellectual circles whose reactions seem to count for so much with the rulers.

One of the most vexing memories of the present regime is the prerevolutionary Hungarian Writers' Union. This is what, somewhat uneasily, the party has to say about it:

It was the right thing [soon after the war] to bring it about. It was a step towards the unity of mind in literature. But it was a mistake . . . to view the ideological evolution of writers with unjustified optimism. . . . The Union had acquired a political influence greater than it could rightly claim, and the party in the meantime failed to make sure that its own leading role should be respected both within the administration of the Union and in the editorial offices of the periodicals attached to it.

The Writers' Union was banned (first suspended, then dissolved) at the beginning of 1957, but reorganized in Western countries in the frame of the Hungarian Writers' Association Abroad. In Hungary, a Literary Council took over by regime appointment, without even

[8] "Issued by the Cultural-Theoretical Working Committee of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, published first in *Tarsadalmi Szemle* and reproduced in full *i.a.* in *Kortars*, March 1959.

[9] Probably because of his influence on Marxist intellectuals outside Hungary, a broad campaign against Lukacs was launched throughout the Communist orbit.

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the pretense of an election. In the recent party document, writers are invited to form a new Union—but strictly in the spirit of the present Literary Council.

THE REGIME'S ANGER over the situation in Hungarian literature is strikingly reflected in the awards of the Kossuth prizes of the last three years. The Kossuth prize is the Hungarian counterpart of the Stalin prize. Since World War II, annual winners have as a rule included a number of writers, artists, scientists, engineers, party officials, and Stakhanovites, and the awards policy has been to maintain a fair proportion between those singled out for their party loyalties, and those recognized as men of value in their own intellectual spheres, irrespective of their political leanings.

Never was a more liberal spirit shown in distributing the prizes than in March 1957, the year following the crushing of the Hungarian revolution. Just as in book publishing, the spirit of the "thaw" still prevailed, and the authorities were still hoping to cajole the writers and intellectuals into their own camp without threatening them in public. Except for the worst "criminals," the revisionists, all sorts of enlightened non-conformist intellectuals could be found on the honor list. The first prize was awarded to the great composer, Zoltan Kodaly, who had made no secret of his disagreements with the regime. Literary prizes were awarded to four writers: the great old man of Hungarian letters, Jeno Heltai; Laszlo Nemeth; and, the poets Lorinc Szabo and Jozsef Fodor. All had on occasion been in official disfavor; only one of them, Fodor, had capitulated to the Kadar regime. But the aim of the authorities was to ignore opposition as far as possible, and to put the attractive names of qualified authors into the regime's show-window.

By March 1958 this attitude had become untenable: the failure of the writers to cooperate with the party in the spirit of revived Zhdanovism could no longer be concealed. On the other hand, there was no one to be placed into the show-window—not, at any rate, among the authors. The authorities simply declared, without explanation, that "this year no literary Kossuth prize has been awarded."

This year the same procedure was repeated in a veiled, and therefore more grotesque form. There was one well-known man of letters among those rewarded: Baron Lajos Hatvany. He is an old and many-sided writer, well-known particularly as a patron of great Hungarian poets, and as a participant in Left movements during and after World War I, for which he was jailed under the Horthy regime. His award was a second-class Kossuth prize, and at least this much recognition has been due him for years. But the dislike of his notoriously "bourgeois" background (he comes from a family of great Jewish industrialists) induced the jury to pass him by again and again—until this year. Besides Hatvany, only the name of the pseudo-writer Imre Dobozy (a former Fascist press correspondent) figures on the list.

All these are symptoms of the government's efforts to restore a tight control over Hungarian cultural life. The present rulers are willing to be less intolerant about experiments in individual style than were the orthodox Zhdanovites in the early 1950 s, but the writers are once again expected to adjust their subjects and the morals of their stories to the requirements of daily politics. Yet the efforts to cajole them—or to woo them—have borne little fruit thus far. The writers remain incorrigible: though no longer able to offer active resistance, they have made it clear to the party that they have not the slightest intention of surrendering their integrity.

A JIBE AT "TRAITORS"

Cartoon to left, captioned "A Western Market," caricatures Tamas Aczel and Tibor Meray, Hungarian writers who fled their country after the October revolution in 1956:

Questioner: "Why do you sell your country more cheaply than your neighbor?"
Aczel: "Because I have the Stalin Prize, and not just the Kossuth Prize like him."

—From Ludas Matyi (Budapest), May 30, 1957

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Parties at an Impasse

EDITORS' NOTE: The Italian CP, with an estimated membership of 1,700,000, is the largest Communist party outside the Soviet bloc. The membership figure for the French CP—430,000—while less impressive, still makes it the third largest party outside the Soviet bloc (not counting the Yugoslav League of Communists). Nevertheless, a peculiar immobility has characterized the activities of both these parties over the past few years: not only have they both declined in strength (this is particularly true for the French CP), but the enthusiasm and vigor of their followers has been markedly on the wane, too. What explains this phenomenon? The answers are complex and in some respects extremely revealing—as shown by the two articles below. Mr. Collinet's is essentially a survey of developments within the PCF over the past three years, but it also offers, in passing, an explanation of the continuing crisis which has afflicted the party. Mr. Galli's article offers a provocative analysis of the basic motivation and characteristics of the PCI, which he holds has been transformed from a revolutionary into a "conservative" party aiming merely at the preservation of the status quo in Italy.

The French CP: Signs of Crisis?

By Michel Collinet

THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY, once a paragon of stability, has been deeply shaken by the events of the past two years.

During the first decade after the war, with monotonous regularity, some 25 to 28 percent of the French voters cast their ballots for PCF candidates in every legislative election, thus forming a sort of political ghetto within the nation, isolated from other ideological currents and seemingly impervious to reality itself. Through periods of unemployment and labor shortage, cold war and "peaceful coexistence," the Stalin cult and collective leadership, the Communist electoral mass continued to hover with only slight fluctuations at the level it had attained immediately after the war, *i.e.,* between 5 and 5.5 million.

To the Communists themselves, of course, this stability was indistinguishable from stagnation, and they made strenuous efforts to overcome it. Behind the electoral facade, however, significant changes were taking place.

Prior to 1947, the PCF participated in the government, and the advent of a "popular democracy" was, for many Frenchmen, a real possibility. It was then that the party seized control of the CGT—the largest trade-union organization in the country—filled the newly created factory committees with party stalwarts, infiltrated the governmental apparatus and expanded party membership to include more than a million members. Opportunists and *arrivistes* were staking their careers on a Communist victory. After 1947, however, the picture changed. Internationally, the cold war was declared. Internally, the Communists were expelled from the government. Within ten years, the Communist-controlled CGT dropped from 6.5 to 1.3 million members; the membership of the party itself fell to 300,000; the great majority of the party's publications disappeared. By 1950, when the worst postwar inflationary movement of the economy had largely subsided, the Communists were losing their power to initiate political strikes and demonstrations. From 1951 to 1954, the control of the strike weapon, even on the

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economic front, passed into the hands of the free trade unionists of the CFTC (Confederation Française de Travailleurs Chretiens) and the FO (Force Ouvrière).

Thus, with the exception of the brief period when victory seemed possible and imminent, the party's electoral strength has implied no equivalent power to move the working masses. It is as if the discontented—always a numerous group in France—had selected the PCF as their spokesman and symbol but at the same time refused the PCF their confidence and their obedience. It would appear that the Communists themselves had no illusions on this score. They understood that they would have to break out of their isolation if they were to have a serious effect on the political future of France. To accomplish this end they created a multitude of front organizations and, after 1952, ceaselessly if not always publicly wooed the Socialists and other left-of-center groups.

The 1958 legislative elections saw the first significant decline in Communist voting strength since the war.[1] The importance of this fact, however, lies less in mere numerical relationships than in what it may reveal of the increased mobility of the French political situation as a whole. The postwar decade in France should remind us that parliamentary representation in itself is no true measure of Communist power.

The "Destalinization" Crisis

Appearing shortly after the French legislative elections of 1956, Khrushchev's secret report had little influence on the factory council elections of that spring.[2] On the other hand, the party intellectuals and the fellow travelers who had so blindly eulogized "the beloved leader" and approved his atrocities, were profoundly disturbed. The PCF had slavishly imitated the Stalin cult by propagating an even more grotesque adoration of Thorez, the self-styled "son of the people". Since the PCF had always affected a particularly blatant and rigid Stalinism, its leaders could scarcely bring themselves to denounce the acts of their erstwhile idol. They spoke prudently of his "theoretical errors," his "violations of Soviet legality" and of his "unjustified acts of repression," all of which, they said, were the natural and inevitable consequence of "capitalist encirclement." They rejected Togliatti's faintly heretical suggestion that Soviet society might have undergone a certain degeneration. As for Khrushchev's reconciliation with Tito, it was presented as a good example of "strategical flexibility" in the struggle against "imperialism."

Certain French Communist intellectuals, emboldened by the example of their Polish and Hungarian comrades, confessed their former errors in various neutralist journals. All this, however, remained cozily within the tight little circles of the Parisian "left" intelligentsia. In July 1956, despite the Poznan riots and the murmurs of a few party intellectuals, the 14th Congress of the PCF saw the triumph of Maurice Thorez and a calculated return to his "cult". The opposition, real or imagined, was told by the "great and beloved leader" himself that it would never be free to propagate its "destructive and anti-Communist conceptions" within the party. With the exception of Aimé Césaire, the Negro poet and deputy from Martinique, who left the PCF at this time, the intellectuals remained silent, perhaps awaiting the advent of a French Nagy who would reconcile their conscience with their party opinions.

These stirrings of conscience would have had no effect on the Communist masses, in any case, if the Budapest explosion had not shaken the confidence of the rank-and-file. At the top of the hierarchy, there were a few resignations in the CGT, none in the PCF. A few intellectuals broke definitively, others uttered a timid protest (*e.g.*, Pablo Picasso) or published criticisms in the left-wing journals. On the other hand, within the working class, the party activists were suddenly isolated and abandoned by considerable groups of former sympathizers. The French working class, like other French classes, underwent a genuine psychological shock. The suppression of the Hungarian workers stirred memories of the Paris Commune and made a mockery of the party's verbiage about democracy and national independence. In the scattered elections of 1957, the PCF vote dropped

[1] The elections also revealed some significant shifts in the regional pattern of Communist voting strength. Before 1956, the party vote had exceeded 30 percent in 31 *départements* grouped in three distinct zones: one extending from the Pyrenees to the Savoy along the Mediterranean coast and the Rhone; another traversing the central *départements* from the upper Loire to the Garonne; the third embracing the Paris region and extending northward to the south of Lille. In the 1956 parliamentary elections, the Communist vote declined in the first two (mainly agricultural) zones but expanded in the third (largely urban and industrial), showing a general tendency toward greater dispersion and uniformization at 20 to 30 percent of the vote (it exceeded 30 percent in only 22 *départements*). In the November 1958 elections, the party obtained over 30 percent of the vote only in three mainly agricultural *départements*, sustaining its most substantial losses in the Alps and Rhone valley regions, the eastern and western sections of the Paris region, and the northern industrial region. The decline of party strength thus was more conspicuous in industrial than in agricultural areas.

[2] Factory councils are bodies elected by workers of enterprises, and charged with administering the various social welfare measures—such as social security, sanitary provisions at factories, old age homes and summer camps, etc.—established by French law for the benefit of workers and employees.

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by as much as 48 percent in some areas—and on the average, from 20 to 30 percent. The CGT lost from 10 to 30 percent of its strength in the factory councils. By 1958, however, there was an apparent reversal of the trend, doubtless under the influence of the rise in prices, the decline in real wages and the interminable Algerian war. The Socialists, who were obliged to assume full responsibility for the Suez fiasco, were unable to exploit the PCF's difficulties. Yet these difficulties remained; and the crisis within the PCF continued uninterrupted.

This much one could surmise from the fact that the party leaders' defense against the rebellious intellectuals was purely verbal. Marcel Servin, the Organizational Secretary, wrote:

> **We tolerate no termites within the party. Nor do we tolerate occult little Petoefi circles which seek to disintegrate our organization.[3]**

But the only effect of these threats was to reveal that there was more trouble in the PCF than met the eye. Outside the party, the leadership was losing the support of the fellow travelers of the neutralist press, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Claude Bourdet. Within the party, every activist who kept silent became suspect. At the same time Khrushchev was tolerating Gomulka's liberalism and flirting with Tito. The PCF leadership thus found itself in a dilemma: it had to assume liberal attitudes in order to break out of its isolation and, at the same time, tighten the party's dangerously relaxed internal discipline. Patiently and gradually, thanks to the centralized and authoritarian structure of the PCF, the leaders were able to stifle every critical tendency; but the moral support of the intellectuals was lost in the process. One year after Budapest, the staff of the party's theoretical organ, *La Nouvelle Critique,* was dismissed. One of its most eminent members, the philosopher Henri Lefebvre, author of several books on dialectical materialism, was expelled from the party. An exponent of the ideas of the Hungarian Marxist George Lukacs, Lefebvre founded a new review, *Voies Nouvelles,* in 1958, the purpose of which was to "explore the French road to socialism" and to define a "Marxist morality" free from the utilitarian cynicism of the PCF leadership.

Boring from Within?

These events also resuscitated a phenomenon which had long disappeared from party life: organized oppositional factions. As early as November 1956 two internal journals appeared, *L'Etincelle* and *La Tribune de Discussion.* These publications, which merged a few months later, were Trotskyist in tone, aggressive in style; they protested against the subordination of the PCF to Soviet diplomacy, made common cause with the Hungarians and demanded the "democratization" of the party. Dogmatic and utopian, these oppositionists accused the leadership of failing to exploit a so-called "revolutionary upsurge of the masses," which no other observer could discern on the horizon. They finally went the way of similar movements in the past—a year after the Hungarian revolt, they announced their support of Khrushchev, the victorious opponent of the Stalinist "anti-party" group of Molotov, *et al.*

The political turmoil of May 1958, the advent of deGaulle, the execution of Imre Nagy and finally the electoral defeat of the PCF, revived oppositional currents within the party. About forty activists, some of whom were still party members, founded *La Tribune du Communisme-Bulletin de Liaison pour la Réunification du Mouvement Ouvrier.* By this very title, the new group announced that it proposed to break with Marxist-Leninist dogma. Abandoning previous attempts to reform the PCF from within, the Tribune group made contact with organizations situated between the SFIO (Socialist Party) and the Communists, notably with *L'Union de la Gauche Socialiste* (UGS) and *Le Parti Socialiste Autonome* (PSA).[4] Its aim was thus to constitute in France a new socialist party comparable to the Nenni party in Italy and Bevan's wing of the Labor Party in the UK.

No spectacular defections resulted from the grave defeat of the PCF in the referendum and elections of November 1958. Only in the universities, where neutralist tendencies remain rather strong, were repercussions felt. The Communist cell of the Sorbonne had formed a National University Committee, fronted in the usual way by a few "left" professors. It was obvious that the Committee was merely a camouflage for the PCF leadership, but certain of its members took its talk of "parliamentary methods" and "democratic sentiments" seriously. Indeed, emboldened by the November electoral defeat of the party, the Sorbonne cell itself publicly condemned totalitarian methods and the PCF's subservience to Moscow, and called for a democratic socialism adapted to modern French society. Accused of "revisionism" and "fractional-

[3] *L'Humanité,* Nov. 12, 1956.

[4] The UGS, born of the fusion of various little neutralist and left-wing Catholic movements, has a small following, chiefly in university circles. The PSA consists of part of the former Socialist minority which broke with the SFIO in order to agitate against the new constitution of the Fifth Republic. Both movements belong to *l'Union des Forces Democratiques* (UFD), along with the Mendes-France Radicals and the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme.*

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ism," the cell was dissolved by the party leadership, and its most prominent members were expelled.

However, the university Communists have had, and perhaps still have, disciples within the party. Leon Feix, a member of the Politbureau, told the Central Committee on January 22, 1959, that "each month thousands of anti-Communist tracts are sent throughout the country to party members or to workers close to the party." Today, after the PCF success in the March 1959 municipal elections, the leadership has again assumed a threatening attitude toward oppositional elements within the party. These elements, it claims, have in any case lost their *raison d'être,* because the party's line since the events of last May has now been approved by the masses. But this, of course, is far from certain. It is still too early to assess the repercussions of these local elections, if any, on the party's internal crisis.

Unpopular Fronts

For years, the PCF has been calling for unity of action with the Socialists—on a platform designed, in effect, to further the aims of Soviet foreign policy. This attitude made a new popular front unthinkable in France. It also sealed the fate of the Fourth Republic.

After the 1956 elections, the Communists controlled 150 deputies in the National Assembly. Together with the 50 extreme rightwing Poujadists, they formed a permanent opposition to the regime. Faced with this *de facto* coalition, the Assembly could form a majority only by calling on the Socialists and a large part of the traditional right. In this majority, however, and within each of its constituent groups, there was practically no agreement on current issues. As a result, the majority was condemned to inaction and the minority remained strong enough to prevent any electoral reform which might have modified the numerical relationships within the Assembly. This strange situation meant that some five million French voters, laboring under the illusion that they were supporting the most radical wing of French democracy, succeeded in sterilizing the Republic and paving the way for the May 13th *coup* of the Algerian colonists. When the *coup* materialized, the democratic parties could not call upon the supporters of a party which, as Guy Mollet put it, "is neither on the left nor on the right—but in the East," without moving France out of the Western camp.

Thus the isolation of the PCF has remained a permanent and necessary feature of French politics. This has been understood by almost everyone—except the Communist voters themselves. During the 1958 cantonal (*i.e.,* county) elections, 179 Communist candidates withdrew unconditionally in order to throw their support to Socialist or Mendesist Radicals. There was no reciprocity: not a single Socialist withdrew in favor of a Communist. And Marcel Servin, the party secretary, himself declared that Socialist voters preferred to ally themselves with the center and the right, because "they were inspired by fear of the USSR and fidelity to the Atlantic Alliance."

The PCF, of course, made frantic efforts to break out of its isolation during the events of May 1958. The party actually voted to support the Pflimlin government and organized some 4,000 "Republican Defense Committees." In about 20 *départements* these committees obtained a modicum of Socialist and free trade-union support, but only during the first weeks of the crisis. In Paris, a "defense committee" composed of Socialists, Radicals and Christian Democrats (MRP) deliberately excluded the Communists, who nevertheless managed to transform the committee's republican demonstration of May 28th into a "popular front" rally. The CGT's attempts to launch general strikes, on the 19th and the 29th, were total failures, since even the CGT activists refused to obey the call. Having watched the PCF openly and deliberately sabotage the Fourth Republic for years, the masses could hardly be expected to follow the PCF into battle . . . in order to save the Republic! Indeed, the party soon realized the anomaly of its position and, abandoning its defense of the old constitution, called for a Constituent Assembly empowered to write a new one.

Two Steps Backward, One Forward?

This, of course, was precisely what General de Gaulle was offering: a new constitution. But there were additional reasons for the Communist defeat in the September referendum. The Kremlin, by executing Imre Nagy and Pal Maleter, opportunely revived memories of Budapest. On the other hand, a considerable percentage of the party membership had been attracted to communism through the Resistance, so that Khrushchev's ill-tempered diatribe against the former leader and symbol of the Free French (*Pravda,* September 22, 1958) rather hindered than helped the PCF anti-Gaullist campaign. In addition, the sudden outbreak of Algerian terrorism in Paris, some of the victims of which were innocent French workers, could not but harm the party cause, as Thorez himself admitted, since the PCF dared not disavow the FLN. All these factors, together with the widespread feeling that the General's prestige alone could check the effervescence of the army and resolve the Algerian imbroglio, induced some 1,500,000 voters to abandon the PCF.

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In the elections of November, the Communist defeat was confirmed: the PCF lost exactly 1,650,427 votes, 26.4 percent of its 1956 total, thus returning approximately to its situation in 1937. During the run-off elections, the party recovered 356,000 votes by rallying abstentionists or profiting from the withdrawal of allied groups such as the UFD, the UGS and the PSA. The votes lost by the PCF did not go to the Socialists. A large number undoubtedly abstained and the rest went to the UNR, which was generally if incorrectly considered the party of de Gaulle.

This point is of some importance. An examination of the election returns shows that the decline of the PCF cannot be attributed to specific circumstances affecting a particular region or category of citizens. In the popular mind, the November election was essentially a repetition of the September referendum. The mass of former PCF voters adhered to no other ideology or organized party. Whether because it wished consciously to break with Communist negativism and Republican immobilism, or simply because it refused to fight for a lost cause, this immense mass was *for the moment* declaring its willingness to assay a new form of constitutional government. Many observers hastened to conclude that these people could now be definitely counted in the non-Communist fold.

Unfortunately, the new regime took no particular care to avoid disappointing the hopes of these elements, and as a result the Communists achieved a considerable success in the municipal elections of March. Although these local contests cannot rigorously be compared with legislative elections, the fact remains that wherever the PCF presented candidates its gains were quite as striking as it losses had been in November.

A more important phenomenon, in this author's opinion, was the formation during the run-off elections in March of popular front lists based on local alliances between Communists, Socialists and Radicals. The official Socialist leadership proved powerless to stop these alliances, which were formed in no less than 75 of the 411 French towns of 9,000 inhabitants or more. In 19 cities these slates won the majority or the totality of city council seats. Elsewhere, their defeat was due only to the refusal of Socialist or Radical voters to follow their local party leaders into alliances with the PCF. Indeed, many of these alliances were of a purely local and temporal nature, designed to maintain a Socialist or Radical mayor in office or to defeat a candidate of the extreme right. Nevertheless, the PCF will, in at least 19 cities, remain in a position to exert pressure on its electoral allies. In addition, these alliances—which were unthinkable a year ago—obviously serve to reintegrate the PCF into what is called the "republican camp." That is why the Communist leadership has hailed these developments, which it considers, quite understandably, more significant than the PCF's own electoral victories.

BEHIND THE APPARENT Communist electoral comeback there are two related factors. One need only recall the optimism which reigned last October, when de Gaulle was hinting at the possibility of negotiations with the FLN, in order to gauge the extent of present popular disappointment and skepticism with respect to de Gaulle's ability to bring the Algerian war to an honorable end. Meanwhile, the Communists have for obvious tactical reasons muted their expressions of sympathy for the intransigent faction of the FLN, which in France is generally blamed for the failure of de Gaulle's peace overtures. This line has doubtless proved attractive not only to those who are tired of waiting for a cease-fire, but also to those non-Communist Frenchmen who labor under the illusion that the Communists can help form a useful counterweight to the fanatical nationalists or "integrationists" in France and Algeria.

Since peace cannot be unilateral, the French masses might have accepted the war's continuation more patiently if its economic consequences had not begun to weigh so heavily on their daily lives. The recession which began in mid-1958 has deepened since the end of the year. In October the number of registered unemployed was roughly the same as in October 1957. By January 1959 it had tripled. However, unemployment still represented only from two to three percent of the total working force. Far more important was a decline in real income—estimated in some quarters as high as ten percent—largely attributed to a general reduction in working hours. The downturn was brutally

[5] In the opinion of this author, the government's financial measures, far from reassuring the wage-earning classes, caused them to fear a worsening of their economic position. On one hand, the measures imposed immediate curbs on domestic consumption in order to promote increased exports; on the other, they hit the smallest-income groups by causing higher rents and retail prices, by eliminating or reducing social welfare outlays (including veterans' pensions), by stopping subsidies to farmers and the pegging of wages to the cost-of-living index, and by raising taxes. Each of these measures, if taken alone, would probably have evoked only a minor reaction, but all together they aroused extreme dissatisfaction and resentment among the wage-earners. Communist propagandists were swift to play upon this mass discontent by charging that the government was deliberately depressing the workers' living standards and accentuating the economic recession.

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felt, especially since purchasing power had been rising steadily up to 1958. The new austerity measures decreed by the government on December 28, 1958, transformed the disquiet of the salaried classes into discontent.

It is not the purpose of the present brief article to analyze these measures in detail. Suffice it to say that their substance and the form in which they were presented to the country clearly played into the hands of the PCF.[5] The party leadership, of course, has done and is doing what it can to exploit the situation. In particular, it is making strenous efforts to wage an offensive in the economic rather than purely political field, and thus to reestablish contact with the free trade union movement.

Inevitably, it is having some success. After all, no other active opposition exists—an unhealthy situation in itself. But this does not mean that the party has converted its electoral following to communism. Indeed, the party secretariat has admitted a sharp decline in the recruitment of new members. Recent history proves—if proof were needed—that the future of communism in France will be determined by the failures and achievements of the regime, rather than by the work of the Communists themselves.

The Italian CP: Conservatism in Disguise

By Giorgio Galli

LAST SUMMER Vincenzo Gatto, one of the leaders of the section of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) in favor of close collaboration with the Italian Communist Party (PCI), stated during a lively discussion in the Agrarian Commission of his party: "The charge made by certain people that the Communist Party is really conservative must be rejected. . . . The PCI is a great force for progress in our country" [1] The remark is significant, for it shows that even in the PSI—that is, in the party which up to 1956 was bound to the PCI by a pledge of united action and which is still cooperating with it in the trade unions, in many local governments, and in various parliamentary activities—the impression exists that the Communist Party in Italy is today a conservative party.

This observation may seem surprising, but it is clearly confirmed by an analysis of the role which the PCI has assumed in postwar Italian society. The Communist Party has long since ceased to be the revolutionary Marxist movement that it was originally; the change in its function since 1944 has been so radical that it no longer has even the semblance of a reformist Socialist party; rather, it appears to be a movement aimed at preserving the present structure of Italian society as long as possible, both economically and politically.[2] This conclusion is based on three considerations.

Economic Issues

The first, immediate in character, is the position of the PCI concerning the most urgent problems of the Italian economy—that is, the transformation taking place in agriculture and the establishment of the European Common Market, which are interdependent phenomena.

Changes currently evolving in the Italian agricultural structure arise out of a number of factors. Main among these has been the disproportionate part of the population engaged in agriculture (about 34 percent, according to latest statistics), which has kept the level of rural income and the living standard very

[1] *Avanti*, daily organ of the Italian Socialist Party, July 11 1958.

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[2] For a detailed analysis of the PCI's postwar strategy, aims and policies, see the author's article, "The Italian CP: Road Toward a Dilemma, 1945-56," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. V, No. 3 (May-June 1956), p. 41.

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low. Moreover, the farmers' principal crop, wheat, is obtained at high production costs and has found a market only because of government price supports, implemented by stock-piling. Increasingly there have been pressures to overcome these imbalances. In the long run the process of modernizing and rationalizing the agricultural sector is inevitable: the trend must be—and is—toward a reduction of costs, mechanization (which further reduces the need for labor), the sacrifice of marginal land, the transfer of farm workers to other economic sectors, the partial substitution of fruit- and stock-raising for wheat production (toward the latter end the government has recently reduced its price supports for wheat). Yet it is evident that most of these changes require heavy investments of capital, which the smaller farmer can hardly provide.

It is perhaps equally inevitable that certain interests—the big land-owners, the Federation of Agrarian Associations (a powerful private group aimed at coordinating agricultural production and trade, whose influence derives from privileged arrangements *vis-à-vis* fertilizer and tractor sales, import-export licenses, *etc.*) and finally the organization of farmers with medium holdings—are supporting this process of modernization and rationalization toward the end of increasing their own financial profits and political power; in short, they aim at reaping most of the benefits of the transition for themselves, at the expense of a part of the low-income agricultural population (those who are compelled to leave the fields, often without immediate or adequate means of livelihood elsewhere) and indeed at the expense of the whole community (whose taxes must help to pay for investments in agriculture).

In this situation the Italian Communist Party, though it talks a lot about the dangers of such power groups and claims to represent the interests of the underdog, has made no move whatsoever toward a program which would recognize the modernization of agriculture as an irresistible (and desirable) development and thus would concentrate its energies on obtaining a more equitable impact of the hardships and benefits it imposes. Instead the party has resorted to a defense of the present system—that is, the characteristics of small or fractioned farm property, wheat cultivation, the compulsory hiring of labor, *etc.*[3]—simply because it fears any change which might threaten its present positions of economic and electoral strength in the countryside. In doing so it finds itself in the same position as certain elements of the rural bourgeoisie who cling to outmoded production concepts and who are neither able now nor likely later to keep pace with the present transformation.

The Party Stance on ECM

Very much the same situation applies with regard to the impact of the European Common Market and the party's attitude toward it. Unquestionably the Common Market, by broadening the field of business competition to producers of all member nations, imperils marginal production situations—that is, individual firms of sectors in the Italian industrial structure which are less advanced technologically and whose production costs are high. Unquestionably also, the necessary process of transformation and the resulting tendency to concentrate productive forces will be exploited by the stronger groups—the oligopolies and cartels—to consolidate their privileged positions *vis-à-vis* small and medium-sized economic operators.

But, since the trend expressed in the European Common Market cannot be arrested, a political movement genuinely devoted to progress would be expected, in the new circumstances, to work for the protection of the interests of workers and consumers who may be harmed by the increased hegemony of the trusts. Efficient organizations need to be created to guard the consuming public against unfair pricing policies and other malpractices. And above all, the labor unions need to have their bargaining power restored—a power which they have gradually lost over the last ten years mainly because the largest union organization, the Communist-controlled Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), has failed to conduct determined fights to protect workers and union rights in the course of the necesary adjustment to technical modernization.

As in the case of its agricultural policy, the Communist Party—instead of acknowledging the problems raised by advancing technology and by the elimination of inter-country trade barriers, and shaping a vigorous, constructive defense of the workers' interests accordingly—simply offers a lot of verbiage about needed reforms and clings to its opposition to the European Common Market. This opposition is clearly motivated not only by the party's need to range itself with the foreign policy positions of the USSR, but also by its fear that the ECM will produce a crisis in the retarded sectors of industry and thereby jeopardize Communist holds over labor, already weakened to some extent by successive intra-party difficulties of recent years (par-

[3] Compulsory hiring of farm labor was established by a law of 1947, requiring farm owners to employ a minimum number of hands proportionate to the size of the area cultivated. The law was recently judged unconstitutional, a decision which the Communists heartily protested.

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ticularly, the seismic repercussions of events in the Soviet orbit during 1956).

The party speaks with a loud enough voice; witness, for instance, a typical declaration of aims recently issued by PCI Vice-Secretary Luigi Longo:

> **Our alternative policy [to the Common Market] consists in introducing radical industrial, agricultural and fiscal reforms; in increasing the purchasing power of wages and salaries; in extending trade to all world markets, including those of the Socialist camp. . . . Such a policy, and only such a policy, can ensure maximum employment, the elimination of social and national imbalances. . . . Therefore . . . we ask that the launching of the European Common Market be suspended.**[1]

High-sounding rhetoric, this, yet it ceases to be impressive when the record of the last 15 years is examined; for just that long the party has been talking about the need for "radical reforms," but has done nothing in the way of concrete action to bring them about. On the contrary, its policies have helped to strengthen the hand of the privileged interests and to weaken the organized influence of the workers and peasants.

The "Honorable Opposition"

This long-range trend of Italian Communist policy—and the long-range party objective which dictates it—constitutes the second consideration justifying the charge that the PCI has transformed itself into a conservative party. The answers as to why—and how—the party's policies have failed the people it claims to champion are rooted in one basic fact: that is that the strategic aim of the PCI leadership is to preserve the present system of political relations in Italy—a system which assures it of all of the advantages of a permanent opposition as well as a partial exercise of the power of governance.

Thanks to the vote it has commanded in postwar Italy (the reasons for which will be discussed), the Communist Party holds a considerable share of the power which a system of parliamentary democracy grants to the forces of political opposition. Today the PCI commands some two hundred seats in the Italian Parliament (counting both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate); it also controls the local administrations of hundreds of Italian communities, both large and small, along with the agencies they operate (public markets, hospitals, welfare services, *etc.*).

An examination of the Italian scene shows that neither the activities of the Communist members of Parliament nor the administrative principles of Communist-controlled municipalities differ markedly from those of other Italian political groups. The parliamentary contingent has its share of tacticians, its self-seekers, its defenders of special or local interests, as do other parties. Local Communist administrations run their municipal agencies and welfare services, determine their taxation and patronage policies, *etc.*, according to the same criteria of political success as motivate administrations of the center or the right.

In short, the Communist opposition has completely—and profitably—become a part of the Italian political system. This "vested interest" is the clue to the entire range of party policies: above all, the leadership wishes to avoid any course which might lead to a change in the present system of political relations and distribution of electoral influence in Italy. Because its main aim is to safeguard its entrenched positions, the party is unwilling to engage in genuine struggles, either in the political arena or on the labor union front, to bring about the "radical reforms" of which it speaks so freely, for fear that the repercussions of a real joining of issues might upset the present balance of power to its own detriment.

As a result, the party has assumed the role of a verbally noisy but actually accommodating opposition. Its members may hurl invectives against the "forces of privilege" when speaking in Parliament or at marketplace or union rallies, but its attitude has been to avoid any decisive action on important issues which might provoke counter-pressures by those forces.

IN THE AREA OF trade union policy, examples of the operation and effect of this attitude are easily found. Again and again the CGIL has backed away from show-downs with the entrepreneurs on issues vitally affecting the workers' interests and the unions' bargaining powers. The list of concessions which it has consequently made over recent years includes: abandonment (in 1950) of the idea that unions should have a voice in decisions concerning lay-offs, a right previously conceded in part by management; curtailment (by an agreement of 1953) of the activities of workers', or shop-stewards', committees and labor "activists" in the factories; loss of union control over employment offices (a function transferred to governmental labor bureaus by a law of 1949, which Communist deputies in Parliament joined in supporting) and—what was more crucial—the later abandonment of union efforts to ensure a fair application of that law, a critical problem in a country such as Italy suffering

[1] *L'Unità*, daily organ of the PCI, December 21, 1958.

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from a structural form of unemployment; the crippling of a long drawn-out fight (begun in 1951) for a general wage increase by the GCIL's restriction of strikes to token protest actions, culminating in its meek acceptance—despite verbal threats of a "fight to the finish"—of the terms of the 1954 wage agreement concluded between the industrial interests and the non-Communist CISL and UIL union organizations.

This list of CGIL retreats could be extended for several pages, space allowing. There have been, of course, a number of factors affecting the federation's course, such as the exigencies of the Soviet foreign policy line or the intensity of anti-Communist ideological pressures in any given period; yet the overall picture reveals a consistent motivational pattern of avoiding any struggles which might lead to sharp political repercussions jeopardizing the present system of governance.

The Politics of Accommodation

The same pattern has been evident in the political and parliamentary tactics of the PCI. It is somewhat ironic to look back from today's vantage point to a statement made by Palmiro Togliatti, Secretary General of the party, ten years ago:

> That which the old capitalistic governing classes in Italy do not accept is, purely and simply, democracy. They may accept, or more correctly, *tolerate* a parliament, but only on condition that that assembly be constituted and function in such a way as to imperil neither their *de facto* monopoly of political power nor their *de facto* and *de jure* monopoly of the wealth of the country.[5]

In the years since Togliatti offered this observation, Communist parliamentary delegations increasingly have given proof that their presence in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate constitutes no serious challenge to the "monopoly" he condemned. On the contrary, in their political maneuvers to protect their role as the "honorable opposition" and to prevent the rise of any single faction—whether of the left, center or right—which might threaten that role, the Communists have shown themselves to be among the staunchest champions of the *status quo*.

The PCI leadership was long able to obscure this fact behind glib party-line condemnations of democratic-parliamentary institutions;[6] but in the past year the party's underlying attitude has been brought into sharper focus by French political developments. For what happened in France is precisely what the Italian Communist leadership has most feared—namely, the rise of certain sectors of the governing classes, resulting in a substantial reduction of Communist political influence.

In the aftermath of de Gaulle's assumption of power, PCI Secretary Togliatti last September made an open issue of "calling the people to the defense of the democratic parliamentary regime."[7] A month later, in the course of a theoretical analysis of the events which had taken place in France, he affirmed: "We have proclaimed . . . since 1948 that the democratic republic is the terrain on which the war for socialism [must be] waged."[8] Again in a communiqué issued in December (after a meeting of Italian and French CP delegates), an attempt was made to justify the PCI's defense of the "bourgeois democratic system" on the basis of the French experience:

> The leaders of monopolistic capitalism are compelled to attack parliamentary and democratic institutions. Their objective is twofold: on the one hand, to decrease the political importance of the working class and to intensify its exploitation; on the other, to subject the middle class to stricter control. . . . What has happened in France shows how far this trend of the reactionary bourgeoisie might lead. . . . In other countries, and especially in Italy, similar tendencies are appearing. . . . The reactionary bourgeoisie is trying to discredit parliamentary institutions; . . . in this situation . . . the action of the Communist parties . . . will require fighting for the proper functioning of Parliament and of democratic institutions where they still operate.[9]

The importance of the French example to the Italian Communists notwithstanding, their "defense of the democratic parliamentary regime" and what they call "the proper functioning of Parliament" long predated any sign of the new ascendancy of the Gaullists. In terms of parliamentary tactics, the main point of this "defense"—besides the aforementioned refusal to push for genuine reforms—has been an effort to use the Communist delegation's vote to maintain an equilibrium of power in Parliament, or more precisely, to demonstrate the usefulness of this bloc vote to the political forces of the center and the right when the latter were in competition with one another. Toward this end, the Communists have often resorted to intricate coalition and alignment maneuvers to tip the scale of power now in one direction, now in another.

An early example of this type of maneuver was the 1948 election in Parliament for the presidency of the

[5] *Rinascità*, PCI theoretical review, February 1948.

[6] See, for example, Togliatti's statement in *L'Unità*, January 18, 1953.

[7] *Ibid.*, September 9, 1958.

[8] *Rinascità*, October 1958.

[9] *L'Unità*, December 27, 1958.

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Republic, in which the Communist delegation used its votes to help defeat Count Carlo Sforza, the Republican candidate favored by Prime Minister de Gasperi and the majority of the Christian Democratic Party, and to elect instead Luigi Einaudi, a liberal Monarchist who had the support of the right-wing parties in coalition with some Christian Democrats. A comparable situation existed in the 1955 presidential election, when the Communist bloc joined with right- and left-wing opponents of Prime Minister Scelba and Mr. Fanfani, then Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, to prevent the election of the official candidate of the government majority, Senator Merzagora, and instead to elevate Mr. Gronchi to the presidency.

Both of these elections involved a variety of issues in which the Communists had some stake, but the main aim of their alignment maneuvers clearly was to promote the balance of forces which at the moment seemed to offer the best assurances of preserving their own position. It should be added that both Mr. Einaudi and Mr. Gronchi had, on occasions prior to their election to the presidency, enjoyed the dubious honor of being personally villified by the PCI—a fact further pointing up the self-serving aim of the election vote.

Recent Communist Tactics

The Communists' resort to such maneuvers—of which the above are only the most conspicuous examples in a long record—has reached a new high in the critical Italian political situation of the past year, that is, the party's alignment with the forces opposed to the now defunct Fanfani government. At the risk of oversimplifying the complex issues involved, it must be pointed out that the crisis of Fanfani's Christian-Democratic Social-Democratic coalition regime was brought about, on the one hand, by developments within the socialist movement—that is, by the PSI's further moves toward autonomy from the PCI, which in turn brought about a split within the Social Democratic Party (one faction favoring a new alliance with the Socialists)—and on the other hand, by an outbreak of latent dissidence within Christian Democratic ranks for fear that Fanfani might move further to the left.

In this situation the Communist delegations in both houses of Parliament joined with the Christian Democratic dissidents under Mr. Scelba (a man whom in the past the Communists have attacked perhaps more than any other public figure) and with other opposition elements first to obstruct and finally to topple Fanfani's government. Toward the same end the Communists in the Sicilian Regional Assembly joined in a coalition which ranged from themselves on the left all the way through the Fascists of the Italian Social Movement on the right.

The fact that the Socialist Party also joined in opposing Mr. Fanfani is attributable to various factors too complex to discuss here, but certainly in part to its hope of strengthening the forces of independent socialism. The Communists have demonstrated, however, that they fear the rise of an independent socialist movement almost as much as they fear the rise on the center or right of a strong faction of determined anti-Communist leanings. Thus it seems fair to interpret their parliamentary maneuvers in the recent crisis as primarily attributable to their increased anxiety—brought on by the developments in France—to demonstrate the "usefulness" of their marginal vote to the competing forces on the center and right, ergo the "usefulness" of their minority role in the present parliamentary system. That this has been their dominant motivation was revealingly underscored by a noted spokesman for the PCI, Pietro Ingrao of the party Secretariat, in a recent discussion of the party's position: summing up the priority of Communist interests, he listed the tactic of aligning with "bourgeois forces, even those with a conservative orientation, that tend to oppose the centralizing and totalitarian dominance of the Christian Democrats," as a matter of greater importance than seeking "union of the workers' parties, the Socialist and Communist parties."[10]

THE ARGUMENT MIGHT be raised, at this point, that the Italian Socialist Party has been as guilty as the Communist Party in resorting to the type of alignment maneuvers described above. Inasmuch as the PSI has long acted in close collaboration with the PCI, this is manifestly true. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the PSI has insisted on regarding such maneuvers as occasional expedients—whereas the Communists have made them a permanent feature of their parliamentary tactics. To cite an instance of this difference in attitude: a Communist source, in justifying the PCI's *rapprochement* with Fanfani's opposition, used the argument that "the parties of the right are no longer today what they were ten years ago; the monarchists have practically set aside the institutional question and the 'Missini' [the aforementioned Fascists of the Italian Social Movement] are no longer the danger that they may have been in the past";[11] the Socialist organ *Avanti,* on the

[10] *Ibid.,* December 23, 1958.

[11] Ruggero Zangrandi, writing in the para-Communist daily *Paese Sera,* December 11, 1958.

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other hand, characterized the lineup of forces against Fanfani as an "inevitable . . . technical convergence of the votes of the right with our votes; of that right which is not different today, under any aspect at all, from what it was ten years ago, from what it has always been and will always be."[12]

Another, more crucial issue that might be raised to refute the above thesis is the argument, representing a long prevalent point of view, that the PCI's political tactics and maneuvers are all part of a shrewd and unscrupulous design to hobble the process of parliamentary government with the ultimate aim of liquidating the government itself. This point of view reflects the general, indeed almost conditioned, tendency to look upon Communists of all brands and nationalties as relentless Machiavellians who never lose sight of their ultimate goal of total power. Yet when the long-range effect of PCI tactics is weighed over the almost fifteen years in which they have been used, when it is realized that the Communists, while generally increasing their own electoral strength, have by their do-nothing policies actually weakened the position of the poorer classes *vis-à-vis* the privileged classes and contributed to the increased economic and political strength of the latter, then it becomes clear that the tactics in question are those not of Machiavellian revolutionaries but of an accommodating opposition bent solely on protecting its own position within the existing system.

To turn this the other way around—and to sum up the thesis thus far—the PCI cooperates under the present system of parliamentary democracy not for the purpose of proposing a positive political alternative to the majority forces, or of pushing progressive innovations and reforms, but merely for the purpose of preserving the system itself, the institutional forms of which afford the Communists enough of a share of power to satisfy them.

The Soviet Role in PCI Propaganda

If all of the foregoing is a valid interpretation of the PCI's position, then how, it may be asked, has the party justified its inactivity to its following? The main effort of the leadership has been to promote the idea that a genuine transformation of political and social relations in Italy is contingent upon future developments in the international situation and the further expansion of Soviet influence—and by the same token, to show that its present position is dictated by the exigencies of foreign policy. This line of argument has never been set forth as official dogma, but its permeation of party thinking has been indirectly revealed in the protests of dissident elements within the PCI.[13]

One such protest was launched in 1951 by the party leader Valdo Magnani, in a plea for a more vigorous reform program—and led to his expulsion from the PCI in short order; he declared at a regional party congress:

> There is an opinion . . . that the revolution can take a step forward only through war, and . . . this opinion is quite prevalent within our party. . . . It is even thought that in the present phase of the world struggle, the revolution can be won only by bayonets [of the Soviet Army] crossing our frontiers. . . . It is clearly impossible at present to imagine a victory of the workers apart from the action engaged in on an international scale by the Soviet Union. . . . But we are not here to make predictions about the "great day" of victory, as . . . our comrades would say. . . . We are here to discuss the function of our party today within the national community.[14]

A much different point of view, but one which also scored the PCI's reliance on Soviet pace-setting, was that of the *Communist Action* defectors of 1955, whose program was based on a demand for immediate revolutionary action:

> In manifest contradiction of the victories won by the international proletariat . . . we are not permitted to pursue and to intensify the workers' struggles because [it is said] "the international situation is unfavorable." This is a convenient theory, serving merely to justify the temporizing and defeatist policy of the Italian Communist Party. Not only that, but the statement is allowed to circulate within the party that it is the Soviet Union itself which discourages and considers historically unfeasible a fight to the finish in Italy.[15]

THE PARTY'S linking of the Italian situation to international developments and to Soviet initiative has led to its putting dominant stress in its propaganda on the USSR and the so-called "socialist camp." And it is the substance of this propaganda which, in the author's opinion, constitutes the third and final consideration justifying the charge that the PCI is a conservative party.

Incessantly, in Communist Party writings and rhetoric, the Soviet Union is glorified as the country where Good

[12] Editorial in *Avanti,* unsigned but attributable to Nenni, December 14, 1958.

[13] For an interesting discussion of dissident factions which have defected from the PCI, see Enzo Tiberti, "The Italian Ex-Communists," *Problems of Communism,* Vol. VIII, No. 1 (January-February 1959), p. 52.

[14] V. Magnani and A. Cucchi, *Dichiarazioni e Documenti* (Declarations and Documents), Luigi Parma Publishing House, Bologna, 1951, p. 9.

[15] Open letter issued by the Communist Action dissidents at the Fourth National PCI Conference, January 1955, p. 3.

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has decisively vanquished Evil; where conflict between classes, social groups and individuals is forever ended; where enlightened leaders ensure the harmonious development of society as a whole and of the citizens within that society, without the contradictions and rivalries that have characterized the past millenia of human history. Further, the transition from Soviet socialism to communism is said to be taking place amid general enthusiasm and by common accord, disturbed only now and then by the mistakes or malevolence of a few misguided persons or by the vain conspiracies of world imperialism. The whole course of Sovietism, dating from November 7, 1917, is therefore treated as a sort of sacred history, lacking that characteristic of "profane" history which Marx considered basic—the struggle between different social classes arising out of the evolution of production relationships.

That after Stalin's death there were bitter struggles for power between opposing factions of the Soviet party, related to and within the framework of radical transformations of the Soviet economy; that there continue to be competitions and races for influence among various sectors of society such as the industrial technocracy, agrarian management, the political bureaucracy, the army, and the working class, is in the view of the Italian Communist Party pure and simple fabrication.

Not even the events of 1956 have changed this view, as evidenced by the following statement made by Mr. Togliatti in a speech celebrating the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution:

> **The errors committed [under Stalinism] have not in any way injured the socialist system, which, in substance, signified the end of the exploitation of man by man, the end of the exploiting and the oppressed classes, the direction of society by the workers. On the contrary, the very denunciation of these errors and their subsequent correction are further proof of the validity of the system. The leaders of the USSR not only have speedily eliminated the abuses that flourished before, but have taken further steps ahead. . . . Socialism is therefore winning in all fields.**[16]

The dogmatic insistence that the establishment of socialism has automatically abolished social conflict in what now amounts to one-third of the world—the consequent deliberate disregard of the real problems which have continued to plague the peoples living under the socialist system—constitutes one of the most conservative "philosophies" of history to appear in modern times. And the fact that the Italian Communist Party clings to its stereotyped picture of the non-existent Soviet utopia —ostensibly to justify the cruciality of Soviet initiative in the world (and the Italian) struggle for socialism—actually to rationalize its unwillingness to act on its own toward any measure of reform—is the final measure of its conservatism.

[16] *L'Unità*, November 17, 1958.

The Sources of Party Support

We come at last to an issue which has been implicit throughout the present paper: if the tactical maneuvers of the PCI are aimed at conservative opposition to the evolution of Italian society; if the strategic objective is purely and simply the preservation of the present institutional system of governance; if the ideological justification of this line of action is a philosophy which deliberately ignores reality—then how, in these circumstances, has the PCI leadership managed to retain the support of a notable sector of precisely those social classes which most desire genuine reform?

The answer is that if the PCI is conservative, the other parties are equally so, in the sense that the term has been used here to denote the lack of a vigorous effort to reduce the economic and social imbalances in Italian society. At the same time the PCI has the advantage over the other parties of a revolutionary tradition that has always had appeal for the poorer sectors of the populace and especially the industrial workers, influenced in the past by trends in turn anarchical, then maximalist and finally Leninist. The party plays to this predisposition of its audience with artful doses of Leninist revolutionary jargon, with profuse protest against the entrenched forces of privilege, with promises of the reckoning to come—exhibiting a richness of verbiage that far outreaches its pocketbook of deeds. And in this token protest the poorest and most destitute elements of the population at least find some outlet for their discontent.

Moreover, the PCI has a well-organized party and bureaucratic machine, an advantage shared by only one other party, the Christian Democrats. In the municipalities under PCI control thousands of salaried functionaries (for the most part modestly paid, but a sure salary is important in Italy) are at work plying the party's cause among the local electorate.

The support given the Communist Party today has nothing in common, however, with the active, spontaneous and enthusiastic backing it enjoyed during the resistance period and in the first postwar years, when the best moral and intellectual forces of Italian society could be counted in its camp. Today the vote it is given is based on a sentimental—or more precisely an habitual—rather than a rational acceptance of the party.

Acceptance of the tradition, of the generic protest, of the organizational apparatus: this is the strength,

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if one wants to consider it that, of the Communist Party in Italy. Yet there are incipient signs that such foundations of strength will not support the edifice forever. The millions of votes generally given to the Communists may be impressive to the superficial observer; but it must be kept in mind that the Italian Socialist Party, with an apparatus and financial resources far inferior to those of the Communists, raised their support to 4,200,000 votes in the 1958 elections, as compared to the PCI's 6,700,000; that the Christian Democratic Party, which shares with the Communists the advantage of an efficient organization, has in the past few years increased its following in the South of Italy to at least equal that of the PCI; finally, and most important, that there is a substantial difference between the number of votes a party wins and its effective political strength, as was demonstrated recently in the case of the French Communist Party.

Today the PCI, having failed to achieve its ostensible objectives both in the political area and in the trade unions, relies on the glorification of the "victories" won in the Soviet Union and "in the field of socialism" as the most frequent theme in its propaganda orchestration. But there are disadvantages in this line too, as Togliatti himself has pointed out:

> **In view of the victories of socialism, some workers, some militant members, may become convinced that success will come by itself to us also. This would be a grave error, fraught with consequences for democracy and for the workers' movement in our country.**[17]

Again, on the occasion of the announcement of the Soviet new seven-year economic plan, the party paper, for all its enthusiasm over the event, showed concern over the possible reaction in the Italian industrial areas, where social tension is high due to recent dismissals:

> **Our first thought is for the workers . . . whose very existence is threatened. . . . What will they think . . . when they learn . . . that within seven years Soviet industry will absorb ten million more workers and technicians? . . . The majority will have their fighting spirit strengthened. . . . But others will shake their heads and say: "This is all very fine, but it does not concern us. The USSR is far away and the future is not important, since we must feed our children today, not in a month or in a few years.**[18]

Those who know the semantic habits of the PCI and the real situation within the Italian working class will realize that the reference to "some militant members" and "others" reflects a state of mind that is becoming more and more widespread, even among those who continue to give the PCI their suffrage and trust. There have been too many unfulfilled promises, too wide a separation between the dazzling prospects held out by party programs and the grim reality of social conditions, for any spirit of serious political obligation to be kept alive. This attitude is attested to by reports of growing absenteeism at party meetings and gatherings of all kinds, a vague form of protest which has not as yet seriously hurt the bureaucratic organization of the party but which points to a certain decline in its influence.

TO CONCLUDE WHERE this paper started, the state of mind that has been gaining ground among the Communists' supporters has also been penetrating to the party hitherto allied with the PCI. Here is a description—meant to be ironical but enlightening nonetheless—of the attitude of the PSI "right-wing" faction headed by Mr. Nenni, as phrased by a member of the opposing pro-Communist wing:

> **The principal activist members of the right wing speak clearly . . . [saying]: "The pressure of management and the political pressure are increasing; after ten years of fruitless struggle, the workers are tired. We are still wall against wall. We have to join the Christian Democrats in the Government. We will be followed by the middle classes and also by millions of workers, even by Communists who do not want to die frozen in the refrigerator of their party. The time is ripe. In France, too, the Communists are in frightening decline. In Italy the Communist Party will soon be like the backbone of a herring that has been eaten. So much the worse for them. And let them, in the Soviet Union and in the people's democracies, continue to build pyramids and to make slaves."**[19]

The conservatism of the Communist leadership has thus gradually brought to a point of exhausted resignation those social classes and groups which in the early postwar period were ready to fight resolutely for changes to raise their standard of living and to affirm their social dignity. But the leadership to whom they turned was more interested in assimilating the party organization into the traditional Italian political-class system, conforming to its spirit and its interests. The large masses of Communist supporters have not as yet, however, recognized the nature of their betrayal—that is, they have not identified the thoroughgoing conservatism of the party as such. Until this fact is recognized, or until some other road to genuine social reform is opened to them, they will continue to give a large vote to the party which—with the help of an inherited tradition, an intrepid tongue and an entrenched apparatus—is best able to play upon their discontent while doing nothing to eliminate its sources.

[17] *Ibid.*, September 9, 1958.
[18] *Ibid.*, November 16, 1958.
[19] *Avanti*, December 21, 1958.

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Communism in the Middle East

EDITORS' NOTE: Continuing this journal's series of articles on Communist and Soviet policies in underdeveloped areas, we present below two discussions of the relationship between nationalism and communism in one of the crucial arenas where they meet today—the Middle East. The first essay, by Mr. Joel Carmichael, discusses the general problem of the institutional (as distinguished from ideological) compatibility between Soviet communism and the newly-emerged nationalism of the Arab peoples. Mr. Laqueur's article examines the specific developments in Iraq and the UAR between the Baghdad *coup* of July 1958 and the abortive anti-Kassem uprising of March 1959. Together these articles provide a vivid picture of the problems, inherent conflicts, and future prospects of the incongruous collaboration between two movements which have been—ideologically and historically—in complete antithesis to each other.

The Nationalist-Communist Symbiosis

By Joel Carmichael

DURING THE PAST few years a new constellation has been taking shape in world politics. It may be referred to as the seeming convergence or coordination of activities between the Soviet bloc and the present leadership of the Arabic-speaking countries. This constellation, which first became a visible political prospect with the Czech-Egyptian arms agreement of 1955, has had its ups and downs. Since it was merely one element in the complex interaction of all the world powers, any particular event in its formation was understandably bound to be a variable ricochet. Nevertheless, one can safely say that for a number of reasons the Soviet Union, or the Soviet bloc as a whole, has now become a dynamic factor in the socio-economic evolution of the Middle East.

Understanding of this has been hampered somewhat by the tendency—perhaps inevitable—to think of events of great inner significance in terms of their most superficial aspects. Thus, what has arrested world attention most of all in respect to the Middle East during the past year or two has been specifically the relationships or attitudes of the Arab national leaders toward the local Communist Parties. Since these relationships or attitudes have varied substantially, it has been a perplexing business to assess the net impact on the region of the Soviet regime as such. Moreover, even knowledgeable students—to say nothing of the world press—have been inclined to concentrate their emphasis on publicly recognizable parties, official announcements, diplomatic statements, etc., a practice which has sometimes made it difficult to grasp what, for instance, the repression of the Communist Party in some Middle Eastern country means in terms of the more comprehensive relationship of that country to the Soviet Union as a great power.

More broadly, there has been a widespread, essentially doctrinaire misunderstanding of the historic cultural factors involved in the interaction between Arab nationalism as a political movement and communism as a theoretical system. This misunderstanding has re-

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volved around an abstract view both of Islam—the religion of the great majority of Arabic-speaking peoples—and of communism. Since Islam is not well understood outside the Moslem-inhabited countries, and since Arabic is a difficult language, most Western observers have been at the mercy of scholars, who until very recently—that is, until they were outstripped by actual events—maintained that Islam was somehow inherently resistant to the influence of Communist doctrine. At the same time, it has been claimed that this same Marxist-Leninist doctrine determines the whole thinking of the Soviet leadership and hence its policies, both internal and international.

Obviously, if these interpretations were correct, the great impact of the Soviet Union on the Middle East in recent years would be well-nigh inexplicable. However, it can be shown that neither the shifting relations between the local Communist Parties and the various national regimes of the area, nor the interaction between Islam and communism on the purely ideological plane, were particularly relevant to the historic process which has culminated in the implantation of the Soviet regime as a basic element in the political life of the Middle East.

"What is to be Done?"

If instead we approach the problem in the light of the concrete situation which faced the new rulers of the emergent Middle Eastern regimes, it becomes apparent that a factor of much greater relevancy was the attractiveness of a number of Communist institutions because of their underlying suitability to that situation. For what were the new rulers confronted by? Translated into practical terms, the "backwardness" of the underdeveloped countries boils down to the existence of a sharp disproportion between the capital resources available for investment and the need for capital entailed by the popular insistence upon comprehensive economic renovation. Nowadays economic renovation in the underdeveloped countries means industrialization. The intelligentsia there has been swept into power by the force of the new political movements generated by the diffusion of Western technology, and the leaderships in these countries are now uniformly committed to doing *something* to "catch up with the West."

In all the underdeveloped countries, accordingly, the newly arrived political leaders have found themselves compelled to embark upon a comprehensive overhauling of the national economies. The overhauling amounts, in practical terms, to an attempt to achieve maximum national self-sufficiency within the organizational framework of the new groups in power. Essentially, these groups are drawn from the white-collar intelligentsia, which throughout the underdeveloped world has been multiplying in disproportionate ratio to the socio-economic opportunities available. The political environment in which they operate is characterized by their command of the volatile, feverish support of the other strata of the population touched by the diffusion of "modern" political thought since the end of World War II.

In essence, then, the situation common to the newly emergent nations is one which combines the need for vast capital investments with the channelization of that need through a political leadership propped up by an immature but insistent mass following. Once this is understood, the nature of the problem that has confronted the new national leaderships emerges more clearly. Where were they to look for the needed capital funds? The indigenous entrepreneurial, middle-class elements were manifestly far too small to be able to supply these funds on the scale demanded by the new economic goals, quite apart from the fact that their traditional characteristics inherited from the backward economic system of the past stood in the way of their absorption into any large-scale program of centrally directed economic expansion.

But all new leaderships feel the ground burning beneath their feet: they must do something, or at least seem to be trying. It is this simple, indeed glaring, fact that lies at the root of the convergence between the ferment of Arab nationalism and the structural dynamics of the Soviet bloc. The youngish men making up the juntas which took power in Egypt, Syria and (most recently) Iraq have had to cope with the insistent demand for huge capital outlays while playing—for their followers—the role of dynamic executives on a national scale. In these circumstances, whatever may have been their personal opinions concerning the validity of communism or Marxism as *theory,* they could not help but view the Soviet system—with its foreign trade monopoly, state economic planning, and breakneck industrialization program, all within the framework of a huge mass movement inspired by a certain mystique or "ideology"—as remarkably fitted to their own situation. In fact, the Soviet regime may be said to offer the only institutional complex which enables the youthful leaders in underdeveloped countries to make a show of instituting ambitious programs of "reform" (*i.e.,* economic construction) on the one hand, and on the other to hold the reins of power while paying lip-service to the collective mystique which justifies their enterprise of renovation.

The tendency toward a sort of institutional osmosis

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between the Soviet bloc and the new Middle Eastern regimes is evidently a factor of far greater and more immediate potency than any imagined doctrinal irreconcilability between Islam and communism. Even from the scholarly viewpoint, for that matter, the institutions which formed the foundations of the historical structure of Islam are not at all repugnant to those of modern Communist society. Islam, after all, was based from its very inception upon the triangle of the theocratic state (a centralized sovereign authority having divine sanction), the army (which engendered the actual organization of Islam in the primitive period and later), and the intelligentsia (the ancient scribal bureaucracy inherited from the defunct Persian Empire and Byzantium, plus the clergy). Thus, apart from the element of divine sanction, the actual organizational pattern of Islamic society was entirely capable of institutional adaptation to the Soviet system once the right ideological key was found and appropriate tactical accommodations made.

Functional Imperatives

But more important than these broad historical and philosophical considerations is the fact that the problems of a new regime in *any* country are bound to be of a functional nature, not matters of doctrinal analysis. The prime example of this is the Soviet state itself—the very regime whose ideology is so often pictured as the antithesis of Islamic thought, thus guaranteeing the invulnerability of the Middle Eastern countries to the charms of communism.

When the Bolshevik Party seized power in 1917, it was almost exclusively a party of intellectuals. Its very assumption of power in the name of "socialist revolution" flew in the teeth of Marxist dogma as hitherto interpreted by all Socialist parties, which held that even if it were possible for a proletarian party to take power in a backward, agrarian, and unindustrialized society, it could not institute socialism at this stage. Be that as it may, once the Bolsheviks proceeded to build a socialist society in defiance of previously accepted Marxist tenets, something happened that no one—not even the sharpest critics of the regime—had foreseen: the Bolsheviks were transformed from a party of intellectuals into a corps of administrators.

The transformation of the party—of its composition, its mentality and aims—resulted automatically from the basic requirements of governing a vast country with a huge population, compounded by the gigantic problems involved in carrying out a comprehensive industrialization program directed by central planning boards. But while we can readily see now that this process was inevitable, the protagonists themselves were unaware of it—or perhaps subconsciously reluctant to admit its inevitability.

It is not difficult to understand how psychological inhibitions could well have deterred recognition of this obvious fact among even the most acute internal critics of the regime, *i.e.*, the Left and Right Oppositions from Trotsky to Rykov. Once the Bolsheviks had taken power on the assumption that the revolution in Russia would immediately be backed—and rescued—by revolution in

THE POLITICS OF NATIONALISM

The exploiters of every age have always used both forms of nationalism in their fight against the people—imperialist chauvinism . . . and local nationalism. This is why it is not surprising that nationalism, which in its every manifestation is the well-tried weapon of the people's enemies, has a great revival at a time when the tide of revolution is beginning to move, attempting to turn, arrest, and annihilate it. . . .

History shows that nationalist policies and propaganda mean a betrayal of the interests of the workers of all the countries, and in particular, the betrayal of the interests of the people of the individual country engaged in these policies. The interests of the workers and the interests of socialism demand that nationalism should be unmasked with determination in all its forms of expression.

—Radio Moscow, Soviet European Service in Hungarian, April 15, 1959.

Our country, like the other socialist countries, has supported and will support the national liberation movement. The Soviet Union does not interfere and has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. . . .

We do not conceal the fact that we and some of the leaders of the United Arab Republic have divergent views in the sphere of ideology. But our position coincides with theirs in questions of the struggle against imperialism, of strengthening the political and economic independence of countries that have freed themselves from colonialism, and of the struggle against the war danger. The differences in ideological views should not impede the development of friendly relations between our countries and the cause of joint struggle against imperialism.

—From Khrushchev's speech to the 21st Party Congress, Pravda, *Jan. 28, 1959.*

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industrial Europe, culminating ultimately in world revolution, any thinking as to what might happen if these assumptions were to prove incorrect entailed the necessity of acknowledging that the seizure of power by the Bolshevik minority in defiance of all other political groups would then be proven, in fact, what the Mensheviks had said it was—a piece of adventurism. Critics of the Stalin faction naturally were reluctant to point out that the "moral" degeneration of the Bolshevik *esprit de corps* into the ethos of a self-enriching and self-multiplying bureaucracy was, in this sense, inevitable; consequently, during the period of the most virulent internecine strife within the Bolshevik Party, culminating in the blood purges of 1935-38, there simply were no clearly defined, practical alternatives. Having failed to offer any, Stalin's critics seemed to the masses to be hanging in the air of theory and hence were highly vulnerable to the counterattacks of the Stalinist faction.

But if one can find in the psychological inhibitions just described a plausible explanation for the limited insight of Stalin's fellow Bolshevik critics in the earlier years, these cannot explain why even today, a generation after the Russian Revolution, it is still very widely assumed that the Communist Party remains made up of the same kind of men as before. Yet the reason for this "idealization" of the Soviet regime, for the supposition that present-day Communists still are doctrinaire fanatics steeped in Marx, is also not hard to find. In large part it may be traced to the fact that the regime is bound to think of itself in terms of its own mythology; ideology, after all, is little more than a vast rationalization accepted by its subscribers as truth. Doctrinal reasons for doing anything at all on the highest state level are invariably sought, and of course found, in the voluminous literature of Marxism-Leninism—and, for that matter, are often believed in. (The regime's bitterest opponents have themselves drawn upon the same doctrinal arsenal for their weapons, for these are easily come by). Thus, the Soviet regime explains itself to both friends and foes in terms of the current official version of its ideology, which after all is what ideology is for.

Russia Uber Alles

Perhaps the most striking development in Soviet political evolution was the emergence of the Stalin cult and the concomitant reduction of the party apparatus to a symbolic and ceremonial role. The complete suppression, under Stalin, of democratic centralism, which had been at least an ideal of the Bolshevik Party before its transformation into a body of administrators, was the inevitable socio-intellectual by-product of the party's coalescence with the bureaucracy which had to be created to cope with the problems of the new order. The bureaucracy grew rapidly and in almost geometric proportion to the expanding programs of collectivization and industrialization; and its sanctification was reflected in the mores and beliefs of the new society. The party and bureaucracy, placed at the summit of this society, have established its intellectual norms. In this sense, the theory of communism has of course remained—serving as the ideological arm, philosophical arsenal, social mask and icon of worship of a bureaucracy which, in its actual day-to-day functioning, is altogether engrossed in practical tasks. But the preoccupation with theory for its own sake, which characterized the early Bolshevik Party, as well as all other socialist parties before the Russian Revolution, naturally receded into the background as the bureaucracy, parallel with the growth of its administrative and diplomatic functions, evolved into its present form.

The touchstone of Soviet policy has accordingly become the practical self-interest of the Soviet state and bureaucracy, rather than any real dedication to the theoretical principles of Marxism. A by-product of this subordination of theory to material self-interest has been transformation of the foreign Communist Parties into instruments of Soviet *Realpolitik* rather than of Marxist world revolution *per se*. This has meant the suppression of free and uncommitted discussion in all the foreign parties, and their incorporation into an international Communist apparatus under the direct and exclusive control of the Kremlin.

The question of how the interests of the Soviet state are to be interpreted is another matter. Indeed, it is precisely in the varying interpretations of Soviet material interests that the functional dynamics of Soviet policy as distinct from Communist doctrine may most clearly be perceived. However, the important point is that, whatever the specific policy decision in question, the regime's material interests that inspired it are invariably set forth—as a matter of course—in a language, or jargon, that sums up the mythological hangover from the past, however genuinely it still may be reflected in the faith of individuals.

It is the failure to grasp this vital point which is responsible for the bafflement of so many students who undertake to assess the motivations of the Soviet regime. There is an inherent tendency—among scholars it may become an occupational disease—to accept rationalizations at their face value, even when specific rationalizing statements are denied: many students, that is, take the

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point of departure for granted, even though they may disagree with the conclusions drawn by Soviet strategists from their theoretical premises. Thus, the doctrinal explanations of Soviet policy are often over-emphasized at the expense of a more functional or materialist explanation based on practical interests which may or may not also be discerned.

The Realities of *Realpolitik*

What all this boils down to on the practical plane is that the Soviet Union may, for instance, conclude alliances with other powers on what may well seem to outsiders an "unprincipled" basis. For in the pursuit of tactical goals, the Soviet regime—despite its ostensible doctrinal rigidity—has invariably proved flexible enough to accommodate itself to any aspect whatever of the non-Soviet world. This was true, in fact, even in the earliest days when the Bolshevik Party was still dominated by men of predominantly theoretical intellect. In signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the German armies, the Soviet regime—experiencing its first tussle with the realities of power politics—showed itself capable of giving way to *force majeure* while simultaneously finding an ideological cover for the operation, a process to which the Soviet leaders have grown more and more accustomed ever since.

Thus, despite the extraordinary reluctance of Western opinion to make a realistic estimate of the possibilities of cooperation between the Soviet bloc and the Arab nationalist movement, the stage actually had been set for such cooperation for some time. Viewed from the standpoint of the new regimes in the underdeveloped Middle Eastern countries, as already pointed out, the institutional complex underlying the Soviet system appeared to correspond precisely with their most pressing requirements, which were of course quite independent of abstract doctrine. On the other hand, the Soviet view of ideology had become more and more plastic as Moscow's interest in theory *per se* yielded to the quest for practical solutions: in other words, the "theory" governing Soviet practice became supple enough to justify any tactical enterprise in terms of some principle or other.

Consequently, it is not surprising to see the same flexibility which permitted the Soviet leadership to conclude the 1939 pact with the Nazis again being displayed in Soviet relations with the Middle East. The most characteristic illustration of the shift in Soviet tactics may be found in the difference between the present Moscow attitude toward the new regimes in Arabic-speaking countries and the attempt made more than ten years ago to transform Iran into a "People's Democracy" from within.

In 1945-46 the Russians tried to utilize a more or less *bona-fide* mass movement, the Tudeh Party, to institute a Soviet satellite regime in Iran. The Soviet Union at the time was profoundly enfeebled by the war and utterly outclassed on the military and economic plane by the United States, which then held the exclusive nuclear advantage in addition to a still impressive conventional military apparatus. The situation of Iran itself, moreover, differed radically from that of the East European countries where Soviet satellization efforts were already proceeding successfully. In these countries Soviet or quasi-Soviet regimes could be established on the groundwork of a disaffected proletariat, pliable segments of the intelligentsia, and to some extent of the peasantry, whereas such a base was lacking in the primitive agrarian background of Iran. Above all, the decisive factor in the satellization of Eastern Europe was the actual presence of the Red Army. Iran was not in this position and, though obviously incapable of resisting Soviet armed intervention across the Soviet-Iranian border, was protected against this eventuality by the world balance of power. Nevertheless, in spite of these vast differences, the postwar Soviet leadership sought to apply essentially the same tactics in Iran as in Eastern Europe and finally had to retreat in the face of explicit American intransigence.

Since then the Soviet Union has acquired an infinitely more powerful position in the international arena, and has discovered as a result that, in its efforts to penetrate other countries, it no longer even needs the legitimate facade provided by the existence of a genuinely pro-Soviet indigenous regime. Not only can it now deal with the underdeveloped countries on the plane of normal power politics, but it can also take advantage of two things peculiar to itself—*i.e.,* the mystique inspired in these countries by the success of the Soviet Union in transforming itself in one generation from a backward agrarian country into a front-rank world power; and, far more important, the attractiveness of the Soviet institutional complex from the standpoint of what it seems to offer not merely to the "impoverished masses" of the Middle East yearning for a better life (a rather empty cliché), but more especially to the restive young intelligentsia who have come to the fore throughout the former colonial and semi-colonial world.

The officers, students, and white-collar intellectuals who constitute the effective centers of political agitation throughout Africa and Asia occupy a far more im-

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portant position in these countries than do their counterparts in the industrial West. And it is precisely these groups which have been most sensitive to the shift in the balance of power between the West and the Soviet bloc—a phenomenon which they view against the background of their own countries' limitless need for socio-economic renovation.

The whole problem of the Soviet impact on former colonial countries must accordingly be considered from the standpoint of the functional temptations held out by the Soviet regime to the new national leaderships. The Soviet institutional complex mentioned above offers them practical administrative techniques for coping with the renovation demanded by their own followings, while simultaneously enabling them to manipulate these followings through the creation of party propaganda apparatuses which provide them with both an operational structure and an ideological disguise.

It must be emphasized further that none of this implies the existence of a cynical or deeply-rooted contradiction between the political ideas of the youthful national leaders and Communist theory, even in its ideal form. In the West there is a tendency to forget that although the political doctrines and institutions developed in Europe have spread throughout the world and indeed may be said to dominate it completely, the French Revolution itself—from which they all stem, basically even though unconsciously—does not form part of any non-European tradition. The absence outside Europe of such a point of reference makes for a certain diffuseness of reaction and lack of sense of proportion among non-Europeans with respect to Western political and sociological concepts.

Intelligentsia in Ferment

It is this absence of a historical lodestone, so to speak, that has placed the Arabic-speaking and other ex-colonial intelligentsias on such slippery ground. These somewhat patchily educated intelligentsias find themselves confronted by a bewildering jumble of ideas, doctrines, institutions, and organizational conventions. Whereas young intellectuals in the West, brought up in a specific sociological milieu for which certain ideas are modern and others are outdated, react more or less instinctively to what lies at hand, their Asian and African counterparts, receiving, so to speak, simultaneous translations of a host of different Western political ideas, must in effect choose between them. This implies a certain equalizing effect upon the presentation of these ideas to the rising Afro-Asian intelligentsias. The latter must necessarily react to them from within the matrix of their own cultures, and also make the appropriate adaptation to each emergent idea considered primarily as an exotic but compelling importation.

In this sense, communism is no more startling an importation than what Westerners regard as old-fashioned democracy: since both are more or less alien notions for the Afro-Asian intellectuals, it is inevitable that the reaction to them arises out of the local background. In this context, the earlier mentioned flexibility even of theory (including traditional Moslem theory) in terms of accommodation with the Soviet regime assumes decisive importance for the approach of the new Middle Eastern regimes to the solution of their various national dilemmas. Stated more concretely, this means that any discussion of an alleged inherent irreconcilability between Islam and communism is beside the point since societies in flux will ruthlessly select the elements they need for social reconstruction and find a justification for them either during the process or afterward.

Friction and Points of Contact

This is a far cry from the assumption that the political development of the Middle Eastern region as a whole is to be understood in terms of the theoretical allegiances or interests of specific leaders. It would be misleading to imagine that any of these leaders have had the time—or even the inclination—during the past ten years to indulge in abstract political thinking. The development of the Middle East, though staccato, has been proceeding with a certain momentum, and if a specific leader were to begin operating on a doctrinaire basis that seemed likely to interfere with this broad institutional development, other individuals would leap to the task of eliminating him as a "traitor" to whatever the new pseudo-ideological formulation might be.

The new momentum of events in the Middle East, in fact, merely facilitates the conventional rivalries between cliques and the struggle for power among individuals. For no matter how prominently any given leader seems to be in the limelight, it must not be forgotten that many others are waiting in the wings. Once the limelight shines upon them, they in turn will take on the aspect of "great" and "revolutionary" leaders.

The real question, then, is not the attitudes of individual leaders toward such theoretical abstractions as communism, but the degree to which the present-day Arab nationalist movement *as a whole* is accessible to the influence of the Soviet bloc. And here the verdict seems unmistakable. Whatever frictions may exist be-

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tween various Arab leaders, and whatever may be the attitude of any one Arab leader toward the Kremlin, the fact is that the absence of any concrete, functional program in the Arab nationalist movement has made it highly vulnerable to Soviet machinations.

Essentially, after all, Arab nationalism revolves around the mere assertion that the Arabs—that is to say, the Arabic-speaking peoples—are one; bafflement begins the moment it becomes a question of what to do about it. Given this situation, the Russians have found in Arab nationalism a sort of built-in Trojan horse. For by furnishing the Arab leaders with an institutional model for the internal development of their new states on the one hand, and by being able to offer them limitless bounty (subsidies, arms, technical personnel, etc.) without any apparent strings attached, on the other, the Russians are in a position to accommodate themselves to any likely combination of local political personalities.

IN CONCLUSION, it is abundantly clear that the surface byplay in the Middle East involving attitudes either toward Communist theory abstractly, or toward the local Communist Parties concretely, is fundamentally irrelevant to the larger development which has led the new national regimes of the region, hemmed in by the political tug-of-war between the great powers, to lean over to the side representing the combination of state economic control and a party-bureaucratic apparatus. The compulsion to favor this combination is doubtless inevitable at present for any underdeveloped country in quest of national self-sufficiency, however chimerical the quest may be. To drive home this point, a strong case could legitimately be made for the paradox that such a combination would be realized even if the new Arab states were to align themselves with the West. It is in this profound sense that the Soviet bloc has already laid its imprint upon the colonial and semi-colonial countries, regardless of surface alliances.

But basic tendencies are nonetheless easily reinforced by surface alliances, and these, too, will be easily come by in the atmosphere of worldwide tension which will be with us for some time to come. Nor need these alliances necessarily be merely superficial. If one recalls that, in addition to the "cultural" influences mentioned above, the Soviet government—despite all the recent frictions with the Arabs played up so conspicuously by the world press—has undertaken to supply the armies of both the UAR and Iraq with weapons, has assumed exclusive administration of the Aswan High Dam project (including furnishing technical personnel and financing for the entire first phase, with provision for further renewal), and has stationed huge consular and pseudo-consular staffs throughout the Arab states, it is quite plain that alliances present no problem, indeed that the most important ones are those just beneath the surface.

In sum, by virtue of its enormously increased capacity to wage power politics on a worldwide scale, of its demonstrated flexibility in making theory fit the needs of practice, and above all of the functional suitability of Soviet institutions to the internal situation and needs of the underdeveloped nations, the Soviet Union has gained a strong foothold at the classic crossroads of history. Communism's practical compatibility with Arab nationalism is thus unquestioned. Whether or not the Kremlin will be able to continue exploiting it is a crucial question for the future.

An Arabic Scholar's View

> True Islam . . . cannot on doctrinal grounds be reconciled with Communism. Only when the emphasis is shifted from the spiritual to the temporal would transition from it to communism become easy and natural. The grievances most of the Muslim world has against the West, the conditions under which Muslims live, and the legitimate urge felt by them to break the spell of Western hegemony, tempt the faithful to make league with the devil, especially when the devil has donned a turban, has partly concealed his hammer and sickle under his newly acquired burnous, so as to make it look more like a crescent—and finally has started to quote the Koran!
>
> —From "The Islamic Community and Communism," by Dr. Nabih Amin Faris, in *The Middle East in Transition*, Walter Z. Laqueur, Editor, Praeger, N. Y., p. 359.

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Arab Unity vs. Soviet Expansion

By Walter Z. Laqueur

SINCE THE AUTUMN of 1958 a basic realignment of forces has taken place in the Arab world. Conflict between communism and Arab nationalism, dormant for years, has now become a reality of paramount importance in Middle Eastern politics. As this conflict, moreover, will undoubtedly continue in one form or another for some time to come, no further justification need be offered for undertaking to survey in some detail the circumstances of its final eruption into the open in December 1958. To be sure, the new crisis in the Middle East has other facets besides the clash between communism and Arab nationalism, with which the present article is exclusively concerned: it also involves the traditional rivalry between Cairo and Baghdad as well as other specifically intra-Arab problems. Nevertheless, it can safely be said that the confrontation between communism and Arab nationalism constitutes the most vital aspect of the present crisis.

There had been no such confrontation of real significance prior to December 1958. Until then Arab communism had generally been regarded as one wing of the all-Arab national movement, and Nasserism as another. The Communists had been second to none in their enthusiasm for Arab independence and unity as long as these remained distant aims and the party's followers were not forced to make an immediate decision between clashing party and nationalist ambitions. On their side also, the majority of "integral Arab nationalists" had by no means been opposed to Communist ideology in general, and certainly not to Soviet and Chinese Communist foreign policies of active aid and encouragement to the Nasser government.

This untroubled relationship might have been prolonged had it not been for the Iraqi revolution of July 1958. Up until the seizure of power by General Abdul Karim Kassim's military junta, Arab communism had been a merely potential rather than real threat to UAR President Nasser's ambitions as the standard-bearer of Arab unity. But the Baghdad *coup d'état*—greeted, paradoxically enough, with such fervent enthusiasm by all radical Arab nationalists at the time of its occurrence—proved to be the harbinger of a drastic change. The startling growth of Communist strength in Iraq following the change of regime soon threatened the Communist-nationalist partnership with the same peril that had wrecked Communist alliances with the national bourgeoisie as far back as the 1920's. This peril springs from the fact that Communist-nationalist collaboration, though possible as long as the Communist movement remains relatively small and uninfluential, inevitably breaks down whenever the Communists become strong enough to present a major threat to the nationalist ruling stratum.

A number of circumstances favored the spectacular rise of communism in Iraq after the July 1958 upheaval. For one thing the party, though it had been illegal for about ten years, was the only political group that had managed to keep many of its cadres intact. The prisons and concentrations camps, to which many hundreds of Communist militants, and an even larger number of "suspects," had been condemned after 1948, had served the party as veritable "universities" (*pace* Gorki), and when their inmates were released, they had no serious competitors in Iraqi public life. Their rivals were the erstwhile right-wing Istiqlal party, Kamil Chaderchi's National Democrats, and the Ba'ath.[1] The first two were not real parties in the Western sense; in fact, they were little more than dining clubs frequented largely by lawyers, college professors, and members of the other

A recognized expert on the Middle East and a past contributor to these pages, Mr. Laqueur has just completed a full-length study on The Soviet Union and the Middle East, *to be published this spring (F. Praeger, N.Y.).*

[1] Both the Ba'ath and the National Democrats subscribe to a nationalist and socialist ideology. For more information on these parties, see articles by W. Khalidi and Gebran Majdalani in *The Middle East in Transition,* edited by this author (F. Praeger, New York, 1958).

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free professions. The Ba'ath, on the other hand, was qualified as a potential competitor of the Communists, but because of its relatively late appearance on the Iraqi political scene, it still lacked real strength: for instance, it had never succeeded in entrenching itself solidly in the high schools and teachers' colleges as it had in Syria and Jordan where its activity was of much longer date. As a result of this absence of competition, the Communists were able, in a comparatively short time, to gain a dominant position among the Iraqi political parties and in the "national front" uniting them.

But the political parties were only one factor in an extremely complex situation—and not necessarily the decisive one. There was also the ruling military junta, whose members now commanded the key instrumentalities of political control, such as the political police, the "revolutionary tribunal," and the direction and censorship of press and radio. There were sundry popular organizations other than political parties, *e.g.,* trade unions, student groups, and "peace partisans"; and above all there was the "Popular Resistance Movement" consisting of armed militia units. All these key agencies and mass organizations were successfully infiltrated by the Communists, and some were completely taken over.[2] As for the rival parties, the Ba'ath was overpowered, its leading members arrested, and some of them put on trial, while the "Istiqlal" sympathizers were gradually squeezed out, leaving (besides the Communists) only the National Democrats—or, to be precise, that section of the National Democrats which favored close cooperation with the Communists.

What transpired in Iraq after July 1958 thus bore a familiar resemblance to the preliminary phase of Communist political conquest in Eastern Europe between 1944 and 1948. There were, of course, important differences, especially the fact that the Iraqi Communists did not enjoy the advantage of the presence of Soviet troops within the country, nor even of a common border with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, they did profit from one factor that had not been present anywhere in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II: namely, the existence of a reservoir of local goodwill toward communism and toward the USSR.

The Communists and the UAR

The final precipitant of the clash between communism and Arab nationalism—which basically is a contest for power—was the emergence of Communist opposition to President Nasser's drive for the unification of the Arab world. It had long been known that the Arab Communists preferred a loose type of federation to the closer form of unity advocated by President Nasser, primarily for the reason that a federation would clearly have offered far broader possibilities for the growth of the party. Nevertheless, prior to the Iraqi developments just described, they had been hesitant about coming out in opposition to Nasser's unification policies. Thus, when Syria and Egypt merged to form the United Arab Republic in February 1958, the Communists refrained from making any public protest against a move which at the time had strong popular support. Indeed, in Egypt, the Communists went along with the popular tide and welcomed the union with apparently wholehearted enthusiasm. In Syria, on the other hand, the Communists had their misgivings about the consequences of unification under Nasserite leadership, but they were not sufficiently strong to attempt to stir up opposition, though they did go to the extent of complaining about the imposition of restrictions on the party's activity. (Actually these restrictions were by no means crushing: although officially all political parties were dissolved, the Syrian party continued to function and to publish a legal newspaper.)

The absence of any significant Egyptian Communist reaction to the creation of the UAR needs to be viewed in the context of the extremely complicated state of affairs which has existed in the Communist movement in Egypt in recent years. Disregarding several minor factions, the movement was divided during 1956-57 into three major groups: the United Communist Party (formerly called the Democratic Movement for National Liberation), the Egyptian Communist Party, and the Peasants' and Workers' Party. In February 1958, after many months of negotiation, these three groups merged into a single Egyptian Communist Party.[3] The new unity,

[2] By early 1959 practically all the "popular," and ostensibly non-partisan, organizations in Iraq were dominated by the Communists: the Partisans of Peace, the Liberation Movement of the People's Union *(Hayat tahrir Ittihad ash-Sha'ab),* Democratic Women's Organization, Democratic Youth Organization, Kurdish Democratic Youth, Lawyers' Association, Graduates' Association, Teachers' Association, Students' General Federation, Farmers' Association, League for the Defense of Women's Rights, the Trade Union Executive Office, and even the Chamber of Commerce. Also in contrast to former years, there are now several official Communist newspapers in the Arab world: in Baghdad, *Sawt al Ahrar, Ittihad al sha'ab,* and others; in Beirut, *Al Nida and Al Akhbar;* in Damascus, *Al Nur* (until December 1958).

[3] One bone of contention in the merger negotiations was a demand by the first two groups that all Jews and foreigners should be excluded from the new leadership. Agreement was reached when the Peasants' and Workers' Party, which had three Egyptians of Jewish descent on its Politburo, finally yielded to the demand.

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however, was to last no more than eight months. In the early autumn of 1958, the party split into two separate and antagonistic groups of apparently more or less equal strength, one supporting President Nasser's policies of Arab unification and the other—encouraged by Syrian and Iraqi Communist opposition to Nasser—dissociating itself from such support. Consequently, Egyptian communism again finds itself divided as it had been for so many years in the past—with the incidental difference that the two rival segments now in existence have both continued to claim the same name (Egyptian Communist Party).

With the Egyptian Communists not of one mind and the Syrian party, however critical of the UAR merger, not daring to lift a lone voice against Arab unity under President Nasser, it was left to the Iraqi Communists to fire the first shot once they had firmly entrenched themselves after the Baghdad coup. This involved a conspicuous shift of line since, under the pro-Western regime of Nuri as Said, Iraqi Communist publications had frequently asserted that the isolation of Iraq from the "caravan of liberated Arab countries" was a reactionary, imperialist policy. Soon after the July 1958 upheaval, they changed their tune: the Iraqi people, they now declared, were thirsting for democratic freedom, and this thirst would not be quenched by merging Iraq into the UAR, where there was no freedom for political parties. They claimed that the Baghdad military junta had deep faith in the principles of the democratic liberation movement, and that not merely these principles, but the general economic, political and social development of the country as well, would be endangered by amalgamation with the UAR.

Displeasing as the new Baghdad party line must have been to Cairo, the final break between Nasserism and Middle Eastern communism conceivably might not have come as early as it did if the Iraqi Communists had stayed within the bounds of their demands for keeping Iraq itself independent of the UAR. However, they also began encouraging their fellow Communists in Syria to take a stronger stand in opposition to Nasser's policies.[4] Stiffened by this encouragement, the Syrian party responded with a public statement that was bound to offend Cairo both by its "separatist" demand for the creation of individual Syrian and Egyptian parliaments based on free elections, and by its insistence upon the restoration of democratic liberties and other reforms. At about the same time as the Syrian Communist declaration, news reached Cairo of the arrest of Nasser sympathizers in Baghdad. The breaking-point had been reached and the conflict burst into the open.

The Open Break

President Nasser himself gave the signal for the assault on the Communists, choosing as the occasion—curiously enough—a "Victory Day" rally on December 21, 1958, held to commemorate the ending of the "imperialist" military occupation of Suez two years before. The Syrian Communists, he told his listeners, had refrained from lifting their voice against the union with Egypt at the time of its establishment because they knew that Arab nationalism and Arab consciousness would sweep aside all who dared to stand in its way; but now the Syrian party was revealing its true colors. Declared Nasser:

It has refused to see the nation as one nation fighting the enemies of Arab nationalism and Arab unity . . . Certain of its members last week announced their demand for separation, [which means] their rejection of Arab unity and Arab nationalism.[5]

This accusation was followed by others, as well as by concrete anti-Communist action. Colonel Serraj, one of Nasser's chief aides serving as Syrian Minister of Interior, charged the local Communists with spreading rumors and lies in an attempt to sabotage Arab unity. Two Cairo government ministers, who had been sent to Damascus to reorganize the northern region of the UAR, announced stringent measures against "enemies of Arab unity." There were anti-Communist student demonstrations in Syrian towns; the Communist newspapers were officially closed down; and a number of party leaders were arrested—though not the top official of the Syrian CP, General Secretary Khaled Bakdash, who instead was permitted to leave the country and find refuge in Iraq.

The offensive, for the moment, was directed only at the Syrian Communists, suggesting a certain hesitancy on Nasser's part to extend the attack to the Iraqi party and thereby elevate a so far purely domestic controversy within the UAR to the plane of an international conflict. Indeed, a curious note of verbal restraint was evident even in Cairo's attacks on Syrian communism: the assailants in most instances went out of their way to avoid using the term "Communist" *(shiyuiyin)* and spoke instead of "factionalists" *(shu'ubiyin)* or "separatists" *(infisaliyin.)*[6] (The Communist movement in Egypt itself

[4] One Egyptian publicist (himself affiliated politically with the extreme left wing) later wrote: "If the Iraqi CP had limited itself to the rejection of any form of solidarity [with the UAR], then it would have been easy. But the dangerous thing was that the party went on to attack the unity of Egypt and Syria," Ahmad Baha ad-Din, in *Rose el Yusef,* January 19, 1959.

[5] *Al Ahram,* December 22, 1958.

[6] The term *shu'ubiyin* refers back to a movement in medieval Islam that was anti-Arab or multi-nationalist. Though the historical analogy is tenuous, the Communists were clearly meant.

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apparently was considered too inconsequential in Nasser's eyes to merit any new attention).

Two weeks after the start of the attack, however, Cairo cast aside its reticence and explicitly included the Iraqi Communists in the category of "enemies of Arab unity." UAR spokesmen denounced the Iraqi party as an ally of the Western imperialists and the Zionists—not, of course, of the Soviet Union. Thus, according to Akram Haurani, Syrian vice-president of the UAR, the West—and only the West—was responsible for the Communist successes in Iraq.

This theme was elaborated in great detail in the Egyptian and Syrian press during January of 1959. Mohammad Hassanein Heikal, editor of *Al Ahram* (Cairo), wrote on January 4 that, while communism and nationalism had collaborated closely in the past against imperialist plots, imperialist collaborators, and feudalism, this battle had ended or was about to come to an end. He then asked rhetorically:

> What will now be the attitude of the Communist organizations in this region? Will they be deflected from the clear nationalist line in order to raise red flags in the Middle East? Or will they take the hint and shut down?

Other critics expressed themselves more bluntly:

> The Iraqi Communists have put the UAR in the dock, fabricating accusations and lies against it. They have put Arab nationalism in the dock and sneered at the policy of positive neutrality and non-alignment. Finally, they have put God in the dock and circulated a book with that very title—*Allah fi qafas al-ittiham.*[7]

In a similar vein, *Al Gumhuriya* (Cairo, January 7) charged that the Syrian Communists' conception of positive neutrality was the same as that of the Western imperialists. Even the Cairo weekly *Rose el Yusef,* which in the past had been second to none in its pro-Communist enthusiasm, declared (January 5) that it was quite wrong to assume—as the Arab Communists had done—that they had a monopoly on Soviet friendship, and that the road from Cairo and Damascus to Moscow, and *vice versa,* must lead through the Syrian and Iraqi Communist Parties. The campaign became increasingly vituperative in the ensuing weeks—among other charges the Iraqi party was accused of plotting to kill all Arab nationalists in Iraq—and was climaxed, on January 27, by the publication in *Al Ahram* of an open letter by Hassanein Heikal to General Kassim. Aside from its strictures against communism's betrayal of Arab nationalism, the letter was notable for the fact that it made public

[7] Mustafa Amin, in *Akhbar al Yom* (Cairo), January 10, 1959.

The Communists, the Kremlin, the Colonel

Khaled Bakdash, head of the Syrian CP:

So far, the greatest victories of the Arab national liberation movement have been the liberation of Iraq and the establishment of the Iraqi Republic. Nasser is marching on the road of world reaction which aims at annihilating the Iraqi Republic. Nasser is now using Syria as a base of aggression against the Iraqi Republic. In so doing, he absolutely contradicts the will and interests of the Egyptian and Syrian peoples and also the very principles of positive neutrality. Nasser is trying to rally round him the most reactionary forces in the entire Arab East . . . Nasser represents the interests of the big Egyptian bourgeoisie, above all those of the Bank of Egypt, and wants all the people to submit themselves to these interests. . . . The Communists have always been in the vanguard of the national liberation struggle, championing the interests and aspirations of the people. . . . All those who, like Nasser, want to scorn the popular masses . . . are inescapably doomed to failure.

—*From an interview in* Nepszabadsag *(Budapest), April 22, 1959.*

Nikita Khrushchev:

Our country emerged on the broad highway of free development. We have created a most advanced and powerful state with a highly developed economy and culture. President Nasser had the opportunity to acquaint himself with our country personally, to satisfy himself concerning its achievements and to evaluate correctly the Soviet state's prospects for development. All this has been done under the leadership of the Communists. . . .

Many of those who once attacked communism have long been repudiated by the people. . . . Therefore I am sure that Mr. Nasser will gain no laurels by playing the thankless role of fighter against communism, although it may for a time bring him into favor with certain circles in the imperialist states.

You might ask: What will relations between the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic be now? I think they will be the same as before. After all, when we built up friendly relations with the UAR, we were aware of President Nasser's anti-Communist views. . . .

—*From Khrushchev's speech at the Kremlin reception for the Iraqi government delegation,* Pravda, *March 17, 1959.*

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for the first time part of the inside story of Egyptian-Iraqi relations.

The first reaction to the Egyptian attacks on the part of the Iraqi Communists was a statement issued by the National Unity Front on December 31, 1958, a week after President Nasser's "Victory Day" speech. The statement reiterated belief in a loose form of Arab unity and deplored what it termed "American imperialist tactics" aimed at splitting the Arab world:

Instead of aligning themselves with the Iraqi Republic, which had hoisted the flag of liberation and solidarity, the imposters of nationalism danced to the drum-beating of Dulles, Rountree, and Alsop.[8]

The subsequent trial proceedings of the Iraqi "People's Court" against the pro-Nasser leaders of the Ba'ath, arrested by the Kassim regime earlier in December, added fuel to the flame. The defendants were alleged during the hearing to have conspired, together with the old Iraqi regime, to bring about a merger of Iraq and Syria. When the Egyptian press and radio countered by attacking the president of the People's Court, Colonel Fadhil al Mahdawi (believed to be a Communist sympathizer), the Iraqi press and radio promptly sprang to his defense. The Baghdad newspaper *Al Zaman* (January 17, 1959) retorted:

The People's Court is one of the national gains that were achieved by the immortal July revolution. Mercenary voices and stained pens will not succeed in discrediting it; nor will the prayers of the imperialists save the traitors and plotters.

To counter Cairo press charges alleging Communist hostility to Islam, the Baghdad party enlisted the support of Moslem dignitaries such as Shaikh Abd al Karim al Mashta, an Iraqi *ulema,* who declared that "Islam's lofty principles, social and economic, are the same as those adopted by Russian and the socialist countries. These are the same principles that the Iraqi Communists want to apply here. . . ."[9] At the same time, veteran Iraqi Communist leaders accused "reactionary gangs" of misusing the mosques for the propagation of "anti-republican" propaganda.[10]

Another voice—of much greater weight than those of Cairo and Baghdad—had yet to make itself heard in the Middle East conflict. Soviet silence regarding the Arab crisis was finally broken by Khrushchev himself in his report to the 21st CPSU Congress (January 27), when he expressed pained surprise at the attacks aimed at the local Communists in the UAR and vehemently denied the allegation that they had somehow deviated from the Arab national cause. On the contrary, he asserted, they were the staunchest fighters for the national interests of the Arab countries, and to compare them with the Zionists was irresponsible and wicked.[11] N. A. Mukhitidinov, an Uzbek member of the CPSU Presidium, put it even more emphatically. Calling the Communists "the most steadfast and consistent fighters for the cause of the people," he denounced talk of a "Communist threat" to national unity in Asia and Africa as a calumny spread by agents of "the dollar or pound sterling, or both together"—aided and abetted by "the Yugoslav revisionists."[12]

Cairo Answers Back

These accusations were answered by Hassanein Heikal in a series of editorials in *Al Ahram* (beginning January 29) under the title, "A Reproach from Khrushchev and a Reproach to Khrushchev." The editorials interspersed utterances of a conciliatory nature with rather pointed jibes. The existence of ideological differences between Moscow and Cairo had always been recognized, wrote Heikal, but the relations between the two states had nevertheless been an "admirable example of friendship and peaceful coexistence." Had not Khrushchev himself, he asked, made the statement at a Moscow diplomatic reception in October 1957 that "we supported Nasser despite the fact that in his own country he put Communists in jail?" Heikal went on:

We have levelled no charges whatever against Communists in general. It is obvious that there are those among the Communists whom, despite our ideological differences, we regard as heroes. Khrushchev himself is one of these heroes. There are other Communists whom we also consider heroes —Mao Tse-tung, Gomulka, and Tito.

Concluding with another pointed barb, Heikal remarked that it was impossible to argue—as Khrushchev had, by implication—that Communists were infallible: after all, Stalin had not been, nor were Beria, Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Shepilov, and some others.

But the last word in this stage of the polemic was not Cairo's. On February 19, an article in *Pravda* at-

[8] *Sawt al Ahrar,* January 1, 1959.

[9] ANA news bulletin (in Arabic), January 30, 1959.

[10] Mohammed Hussein Abu el Iss, in *Sawt al Ahrar,* January 14, 1959. El Iss spent 12 years in Iraqi prisons. Other principal Iraqi Communist leaders who emerged from prison or returned from exile after the July 1958 coup were Abdul Kader Ismail, Aziz al Haj, Baha ad Din Nuri, and Salim Adel. Communist front leaders in the same category include Aziz Sharif, Tawfiq al Munir, and Kamil Kazanji (killed in the Mosul disturbances of March 1959).

[11] *Pravda,* January 28, 1959.

[12] *Ibid.,* January 31, 1959.

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tacked Heikal's "distortions" as the fabrications of a man who had lost "all sense of shame and honesty." The paper asserted that the Arab Communists' determined loyalty to the nationalist cause was amply proven by the fact that thousands of them had laid down their lives in the struggle against imperialism. There was no point in arguing whether communism suited the Arab world, *Pravda* declared, for "this will be decided by the Arab people themselves—this will be shown by history."

Reconciliation Moves and Mosul

With this broadside from Moscow, the offensive in the running fight passed to the Communists. President Nasser's speeches in Cairo and Damascus on the first anniversary of the UAR were conciliatory: he accused the West of attempting to undermine his cooperation with the Soviet Union by calling him an anti-Communist, and he voiced assurances that such tactics would have no success. A new incident in Baghdad, involving an attack by Iraqi Communists on guests attending a party at the UAR Embassy, evoked a flurry of protest in the Egyptian press late in February, and there was an implicit anti-Communist note in numerous Cairo newspaper articles complaining of Jewish emigration from Rumania to Israel. However, President Nasser sought to smooth the troubled waters by announcing the receipt of diplomatic assurances that only a very small number of immigrants from Rumania would actually reach Israel. He further absolved the Soviet Union, in effect, of any complicity in the matter by accusing the Zionists of having magnified the whole issue for their own purpose.[13]

These conciliatory gestures on the Egyptian side were at first well received in Baghdad. *Ath Thawra* (February 24), for example, welcomed Nasser's reiteration of Egyptian-Soviet cooperation as "an affirmation of what we have been calling for: that the policy of the UAR should stand in opposition to the policy of the West." But, on second thought, the Iraqi Communist press realized that Nasser had not after all retracted his accusations against the local Communist movements as enemies of Arab unity. In the words of the Baghdad party newspaper *Sawt al Ahrar* (March 6), he had "merely given the alleged Communist danger a new look." Moreover, the paper added, if it could be said that "Iraq is turning into a Communist country," it could equally be said that "the UAR itself has gone far in that direction. The Soviet Union is still training its army and providing it with equipment. Big factories are being established in the UAR thanks to Soviet aid."

Despite this fresh provocation, Cairo and Damascus refrained from retaliating, and there was an uneasy state of truce. President Nasser's evident desire to avoid a further deterioration of his relations with Moscow even prompted the Lebanese newspaper *L'Orient* to speak of a "new declaration of love" on the part of the UAR toward the Soviet Union.[14] For its part, Moscow indicated that it did not hold Nasser personally responsible for the attacks on communism in the Arab world, but rather some of his over-zealous underlings. Thus, developments in early March seemed to be moving toward a patching-up of the Communist-nationalist breach. It was just at this juncture, however, that the abortive putsch launched at Mosul by pro-Nasser army units led by Colonel Shawwaf intervened to open a second and more serious phase of conflict. The Kassim regime's forcible repression of the revolt in effect strengthened the Communist position in Iraq still further, compelled Nasser to come out more vigorously and openly against the Communist menace, and buried—for the foreseeable future—any prospects of reconciliation.

The Conflict in Perspective

The Mosul putsch is an appropriate point at which to close the account of recent developments in the Middle East. To attempt to bring the narrative fully up to date—even if it were possible in a magazine article—would hardly be rewarding, for in a situation of revolutionary flux such as now prevails in the Arab world, each day may bring fresh and startling events—the rise or fall of one particular set of political leaders, a temporary rapprochement, or perhaps a shift of the political center of gravity from one Arab country to another. But the basic trends will scarcely be affected by such day-to-day developments, however, sensational; and these trends are already clearly discernible from the first phase of open conflict between Nasserism and communism.

[13] Another polemic that had been going on between Cairo and Moscow also ceased at about this time. The clash had arisen as a result of a published warning by Fikri Abaza, one of the foremost editors in the Arab world, calling upon the delegates to the Afro-Asian Youth Conference, then meeting in Cairo, to beware of Soviet as well as Western "intrigues". Abaza, whose statement evoked a violent reaction from Moscow's *Komsomolskaia Pravda,* called it wrong to assume that the Soviet bloc really wanted Asian and African independence; the bloc, he said, was merely using the newly independent countries as pawns in its struggle against the West.

[14] Quoted in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Zürich), March 2, 1959.

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Looking at the developments in the Middle East in broader historical perspective, one can see that the seeds of conflict had been present, in an inactive state, for a very long time. The alliance between communism and radical Arab nationalism was cemented for a while by what was believed to be an overriding menace from the outside—by "the struggle against Western imperialism." But during 1956-58 this danger receded and the alliance lost much of its *raison d'être*. At the same time, another—perhaps more important—factor came into play. As the experience of many years has shown, alliances between Communists and nationalists are feasible whenever the Communists are either very weak or extremely strong. When they are weak, they do not matter in nationalist eyes and the risk involved in collaborating with them is considered small; hence the nationalists are ready to tolerate them as a junior partner. In reverse, when the balance becomes overwhelmingly tipped in the Communists' favor, the nationalist groups are inclined to choose the slower death obtainable by cooperating with the Communists in preference to immediate extinction.

From the Communist viewpoint, it is the in-between phase that is critical, for it seldom happens that the Communists, as in Iraq, jump almost overnight from political insignificance to a position of great strength. The very fact that this did occur in Iraq, however, created—in the Arab world as a whole—just the sort of halfway situation most conducive to the collapse of Communist-nationalist collaboration. For, by virtue of its successes in Iraq, Arab communism in early 1959 had become far too strong to be ignored, but not yet strong enough to dominate the whole Arab national movement. It was these circumstances which brought the inevitable rupture of the alliance despite the evident desire in both the Communist and radical Arab nationalist camps to postpone a showdown.

Such a development had not generally been foreseen in the nationalist camp, whose leaders tended for many years to belittle the influence of the local Communist parties. Indeed, many Western observers of the Middle Eastern scene also embraced this view with few reservations: as a particularly curious example, a book published in London and New York as recently as 1958 (John O'Kearney, *Red Mirage*, MacGibbon and Kee, London) flatly asserted that there was no communism in the Arab world! For their part, Soviet and other Communist observers have displayed a keener awareness of Middle Eastern realities and, in particular, have shown no illusions concerning the durability of communism's alliance with radical Arab nationalism. Even in the heyday of the alliance, a Soviet commentator on the Middle East wrote that "we do not regard the movement for Arab unity as a fetish"—an implicit acknowledgement of the possibility that the movement might at some future date take a course contrary to Communist hopes and interests.[15]

FOR THEIR PART, Arab Communist leaders have long been convinced that the movement for Arab unity is a "synthetic" and transient phenomenon, and that it will eventually break down into contending left-wing (or rather, Communist), right-wing, and perhaps also "centrist" factions. Whether or not this appraisal is correct, it is a fact that the differences between Communists and nationalists are not as clear-cut in real life as in the textbooks. Many of the Middle Eastern Communists are not really orthodox Marxist-Leninists by generally accepted standards: their basic tenet is anti-imperialism, which is by no means a Communist preserve. Nor do the non-Communist nationalist leaders qualify, either by outlook or by background, as "representatives of the national bourgeoisie."

In view of this absence of sharp class conflicts, Communist observers have occasionally considered the possibility of winning over at least part of the nationalist camp after the "Chinese pattern". Egyptian Communist writers have claimed that in China the "national bourgeoisie" has not been physically destroyed, but on the contrary has even been allowed to keep its own political party; hence, they find some reason to hope that the Arab national bourgeoisie will gradually come to accept a "Chinese solution"—either under pressure from within or as a result of what is somewhat euphemistically called the increased prestige of the "socialist camp". However, such a view, while it correctly appraises the absence of violent class conflicts in the Arab world once the hold of the old ruling class has been broken, ignores the intensity of the struggle for political power.

It is, of course, an old fallacy to assume that the struggle for power—such as the Arab world is witnessing today—proceeds only or mainly as an epiphenomenon of the class struggle. Even in societies that define themselves as classless, the internal power struggle has so far shown no tendency to abate. And if a struggle for power could not be prevented among Stalin's successors—men who after all shared the same political ideology and convictions—it is hardly surprising that a showdown could not be indefinitely postponed between the leaders of radical Arab nationalism and their Communist challengers.

[15] Konstantin Ivanov, in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, February 1958.

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A Guide to the Dialectic

Gustav A. Wetter:
Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union
Routledge & Kegan Paul, London,
Frederick Praeger, New York, 1958.

Reviewed by George Lichtheim

WHEN THE GERMAN EDITION of this work appeared in 1952 it was instantly recognized as the most comprehensive study of Soviet philosophy hitherto published outside the USSR (or, for that matter, anywhere at all, since no comparable work is conceivable under Soviet auspices). The lapse of time has not altered this impression. That it is shared by some people on the other side of the curtain is evident from the publication of an officially sponsored rejoinder by an East German Communist writer.[1] By contrast, Soviet critics have kept remarkably quiet about Professor Wetter, save for some brief and generally misleading references here and there. This is all the more noteworthy since this Austrian Jesuit and Rector at the Collegium Russicum (part of the Papal Institute of Oriental Sciences) offers a much broader target than the majority of Western writers on the subject.

Originally projected in 1945, and partly executed in an Italian-language study some years later (*Il Materialismo Dialettico Sovietico,* Turin, 1948), Wetter's work has gradually assumed dimensions which place it in a class different from the slighter though valuable studies published by I. M. Bochenski (*Der Sowjetrussische Dialektische Materialismus* [Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialism], Bern, 1950) and Herbert Marcuse (*Soviet Marxism,* New York and London, 1958). At present it must be regarded as the standard work on the subject, and even readers who do not share the author's viewpoint have been placed heavily in his debt. That so massive a factual study should have issued from the Vatican is of course no accident. To quote a reviewer of the earlier German edition:

> In Wetter's work we are in the presence of the first full-dress theoretical encounter between Soviet philosophy and neo-Thomism, an event of more than theoretical significance. That the Catholic thinker has the better of the argument can hardly be doubted.[2]

For the most part the ideological clash is implicit rather than overt in Professor Wetter's analysis of Soviet philosophy. Although its categories are repeatedly contrasted with those of Aristotelianism and Thomism, his is not in the main a polemical work, but a careful investigation into the history and the present structure of Soviet Marxism. In the process an enormous literature, much of it ephemeral in form and content, is thoroughly analyzed and digested, so that the reader is enabled to follow the progress of even quite minor Soviet doctrinaires through the ideological (and political) jungle of the "discussions" held over the past four decades—discussions ostensibly held to lay down the correct philosophical line on everything from the dialectic itself to its sadly mangled apearance in the writings of Stalin. This exhaustive historical account is then followed by a no less thorough and systematic investigation of the theoretical structure of Soviet philosophy, starting from its general categories and leading, via a consideration of its formal and material logic, to such oddities as the Soviet treatment of Einstein and the notorious "discussion" inaugurated by Lysenko.

Only at the end are we reminded that the author's interest in the subject is not purely academic, for in his concluding chapter Thomism and Leninism are brought face to face, their similarities being noted with a candor

[1] George Klaus, *Jesuiten, Gott, Materie; Des Jesuitenpaters Wetter Revolte wider Vernunft und Wissenschaft* (Jesuits, God, Matter: The Jesuit Father Wetter's Revolt against Reason and Knowledge), East Berlin, 1957.

Mr. Lichtheim, a British political scientist, last appeared on these pages with "Marxist Doctrine in Perspective," in the November-December issue, 1958. He is currently engaged in preparing a book-length critical and historical study of Marxism.

[2] Franz Borkenau, "A Thomist on Leninism," *The Twentieth Century* (London), February 1954.

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which does honor to Professor Wetter and may even cause embarrassment to some of his coreligionists. It is here that we are told:

> One of the most surprising things that our exposition of the Soviet philosophical system has revealed to us is the existence of a very wide-ranging correspondence between certain fundamental categories of thought and lines of inquiry in Soviet philosophy on the one hand, and those of Scholasticism, or even Thomism, on the other. (p. 556).

HOW FAR is this resemblance merely external? Although the author is careful to remind his readers that the revolutionary and atheistic character of Leninism renders illusory all hope of genuine accommodation, he is emphatic in asserting that so far as its present intellectual structure is concerned, the resemblance is more than merely formal:

> We think it no exaggeration to maintain that dialectical materialism in its present-day official Soviet form, bears a far greater resemblance to the *"forma mentis"* of Scholasticism than to that of Hegelian dialectics, notwithstanding the presence of certain Hegelian concepts and expressions which are still adhered to, though robbed by the "materialist inversion" of their dialectical meaning, and accorded an interpretation which is simply that appropriate to ordinary common sense. (pp. 556-57)

In support of this contention, Wetter notes that what Soviet epistemologists, following Lenin, call "materialism" can equally well be described in traditional language as "realism," since it involves no more than a rejection of "subjective idealism," *i.e.,* a recognition of the truth that "the world" is independent of our senses.[3] His lengthy analysis of Lenin's philosophical writings emphasizes, however, that though the transition from epistemological "realism" to "materialism" (*i.e.,* denial of spirit as an independent entity) reflects muddled thinking, it was nonetheless necessitated by the internal logic of the Bolshevik *Weltanschauung.* In principle, realism (in the traditional philosophical meaning of the term) does not entail materialism, but for Lenin—as before him for Engels—it did. The source of this attitude is extra-philosophical and not reducible to logical argument. The transition can be shown to have operated by way of an antecedent rejection of "spirit" in the Hegelian sense of the term, which still reflected the lingering influence of theology.[4]

In Wetter's view, which will be shared by many non-Thomists, the subsequent attempt to found a dialectical logic upon a consistent materialism results in an insoluble problem: either the system ceases to be dialectical, or else "matter" must be reinterpreted so as to leave room for spirit. In practice, faced with this dilemma, Soviet philosophy since the early Stalin period has opted for the former. Wetter is consequently able to argue that in current Soviet philosophy the dialectic plays no real part:

> It may still be present, indeed, in thought of the early Marx, and its influence may even be detectable in Lenin, albeit to a very much slighter degree. But present-day Soviet philosophy consciously dissociates itself from the early philosophy of Marx. . . . In the course of the development from early Marx to contemporary Soviet dialectical materialism, a breach occurs somewhere—and in our opinion it was definitely made by Engels. Hence it has come about that in Soviet philosophy nowadays dialectic betokens an evolutionism progressing via the emergence and dissolution of opposites. It may be that a truly philosophical working-out of certain of the positions entertained in modern Soviet philosophy would inevitably lead to a true dialectic, as Marx and Hegel conceived it. But the Soviet philosophers never pursue this in any systematic way. (p. 550)

WITH ALL this it is possible to agree, without in the least sharing the author's own standpoint.[5] Wetter, however, does not altogether face the question of how this transformation has come about. Instead he drifts off into a discussion of the resemblances between Leninism and the "religious atheism" of the earlier nineteenth-century Russian radicals. ("At those very points where Lenin has exercised a decisive influence on Soviet philosophy, there are striking points of contact to be found between dialectical materialism and non-Marxist tendencies in Russian philosophy.") This subject is of greater relevance for the history of Bolshevism than

[3] In his only major philosophical work, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism,* Lenin sets out a theory of knowledge which relies on what is technically known as "naive realism," and Wetter is not slow to point out that this common-sensible doctrine requires no more than a rejection of the Kantian standpoint. There is no particular reason for calling it "materialism," and turning it into a diatribe against what Lenin called "fideism", *i.e.,* religion.

[4] It has often been remarked that Hegel's dialectic is operative only because for Hegel there is no real distinction between thought and its object. Both have a common denominator which Hegel calls Reason, and which appears in the historical world under the guise of Spirit. Reason is both subjective and objective, and its "internal contradictions" are resolved in the Hegelian dialectic. It is questionable how far Marx retained the essence of this scheme by identifying the dialectic with history, and it is certain that Engels got rid of it altogether.

[5] Cf. Marcuse, *op. cit.,* pp. 137-38. There can also be no disagreement with Wetter's view that "the curse put upon the dialectic by its transference to the realm of nature" has rendered it inoperative, though his own particular conclusions do not necessarily follow.

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for the analysis of Soviet Marxism as an intellectual system. Since Wetter notes that the decisive breach in the continuity from Hegel to Lenin was made by Engels, and since he expressly underlines the strong positivist element in Engel's thought, he might have laid greater stress on those aspects of the system which refer back to French eighteenth-century materialism and the ideology of the Enlightenment. This would have entailed further considerations on the parallelism between the French and the Russian prerevolutionary developments —possibly from Wetter's standpoint an awkward subject.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, which could be extended to the book's altogether inadequate treatment of Hegel, and of German Idealism in general, a reviewer who approaches the subject from a different standpoint must in all candor describe this work as a monumental achievement. Merely as a display of scholarship there is something overwhelming about it. Moreover, the exposition is not merely lucid but elegant, and the irony with which some of the more preposterous Soviet pronouncements in the fields of logic and epistemology are treated is held in check by an evident determination to be fair to opponents who may have something important to say.

Wetter indeed displays considerable regard not merely for the formal ability of pre-Stalinist Russian Marxists such as Plekhanov, L. I. Axelrod,[6] and even Deborin (the latter a philosophical weathercock who successfully outlasted all storms), but even manages to treat Stalin seriously as a theorist, at any rate in the fields of history and politics. This feat deserves some mention, though it is not necessarily commendable. It is possible to feel that in remarking favorably on some of Stalin's well-known innovations in the domain of political theory, Wetter has failed to note the authoritarian implications of the dictator's stress on the "creative" role of the "superstructure." What at first glance looks like mere common sense, turns out on inspection to entail the restoration of the autocracy to its traditional role in Russian political thinking: a "super-structure" as powerful as that envisaged by Stalin does indeed represent a considerable departure from "historical materialism," but for reasons that are altogether non-theoretical. It is an index to the importance of Wetter's great work that even where one disagrees with him, one finds oneself drawn into a consideration of themes which are central to the phenomenon of Soviet communism.

[6] Not to be confused with Paul Borisovich Axelrod, the Menshevik theoretician, nor with his sister, I. I. Axelrod.

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Popular Literature on the USSR

Sally Belfrage: *A Room in Moscow,*
André Deutsch, London, Reynals & Co., New York, 1958.

Marvin L. Kalb: *Eastern Exposure,*
Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, New York, 1958.

Irving R. Levine: *Main Street, USSR,*
Doubleday and Co., New York, 1959.

Reviewed by George Sherman

FOR THOSE WHO DOUBT we are moving into a new era of relations with the Soviet Union, these three books are required reading. The new relations are human relations. For well over a decade after World War II observers were forced to study the Soviet Union from afar. One expert treatise after another analyzed the Communist system, but without access to the people who compose it. With no contact, it was all too easy and often comfortable to think in the simple abstractions—"them" and "us".

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the barriers have begun to crumble. Mr. Levine puts the case statistically in his book. The "trickle" of several hundred American tourists to the Soviet Union in 1955 grew to 2500 in 1957 and about 8500 in 1958. The figure may well double again in 1959. The human archives are being thrown open, a new ingredient added to the continuing power struggle and ideological conflict. "They" turn out to have the infinite variety that "we" have. Visitors' impressions finding their way into print constitute the beginning of what has been denied the postwar generations for too long—a popular literature on the Soviet Union.

SALLY BELFRAGE'S *A Room in Moscow* is certainly the most "popular" of the three books under review. Miss Belfrage is 21 years old. She speaks no Russian, admits she is "unqualified to judge Russia's political system, its economic organization, or its institutional complex." But for five months in the winter of 1957-58 she lived what corresponds roughly to the life of a young middle-class Muscovite. Having returned from a six-week tour of China with a part of the American delegation to the Moscow Youth Festival in the summer of 1957, by some unexplained "miracle" she got a job editing English translations for the Foreign Languages Publishing House. Her aim: "to try to discover the living realities beneath the symbols to which I, and all Westerners, had been exposed."

Miss Belfrage takes us into corners of Soviet life the older experts can never explore. Her subject is youth, and her easy colloquial style has the flavor of youth. She has a real flair for dialogue, so that her characters—who, presumably, are composites of many types she met—appear as real individuals in a believable setting.

We learn about the "jet-set" through Sergei and his friends. Their life is one frustrating search for excitement —evenings spent dancing "rock 'n' roll" at private parties, or "living it up" in one of the "swanky" Intourist restaurants featuring "real cool stuff" (jazz). Then, there is Shura, who hates everything Soviet ("A new Tsar, but in the name of the people"). Miss Belfrage really disapproves of both Sergei and Shura as much as the "bell-bottomed" prototype of the "Soviet Man" who can spout nothing but the current party line.

She has more sympathy for Kolya, the "constructive criticizer," who admits the brutality and stagnation under Stalin, but thinks they were passing phenomena. Another is Misha, the boy in Leningrad, proud and patriotic one moment, longing for freedom to find his "island in the sun" the next. In the end, we understand something of why the author loves the Russians for "their capacity . . . to have a gloriously zany time or a huge mope." Yet this human variety is never allowed to obscure the overriding drabness of Soviet society ("One gets so starved for beauty," she says). Bureaucracy, scarcity—and suspicion —are as much a part of her daily diet as the monotonous food.

Unfortunately, Miss Belfrage peppers this good reporting with the most naive political judgments. She

Mr. Sherman, whose "Poland's Angry and Un-angry Young Men" appeared in the May-June 1958 issue of this journal, is a young American journalist and student of Soviet affairs. He is on the staff of the British weekly, The Observer.

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labels herself a "rebel," born and raised in the "United States by English dissenters" (she tells us her father was eventually deported back to England because of his "left-wing" activities). She is uncommitted to either the Soviet or the Western *Weltanschauung*. Yet, she has a disturbing tendency to equate the defects of one with those of the other. For instance, she sees no real difference between the "sick" person caught up in the competitive "New York rat-race" and her Soviet acquaintance who sobs about the sickness caused by forty years of institutionalized fear.

Miss Belfrage went to the Soviet Union expecting it to be either "horrible or wonderful." Her discovery that it is neither, but something of both, leads her to the startling conclusion that "one cannot judge any situation with other values than the ones produced by the situation itself." This is dangerous nonsense—just as when she justifies the sacrifice of freedom in China on the grounds that the "whole situation could only be thought of in the most basic terms of *a bowl of rice a day*" (her italics). After all, values are not like clothes, to be changed with the occasion.

MARVIN KALB'S *Eastern Exposure* is a more serious attempt to diagnose the Soviet scene from a Western point of view. It is the twelve-month diary of a young American who patently does not fit Miss Belfrage's highly unflattering stereotype of American diplomats in Moscow. He speaks Russian and knows Russian history, and he put both to use beyond the call of his duties as temporary press attaché in the Moscow Embassy.

Mr. Kalb arrived in the Soviet Union in January 1956—on the eve of Khrushchev's secret denunciation of Stalin at the 20th CPSU Congress. He departed in February 1957—after Khrushchev had partially rehabilitated Stalin as a "good fighter" for Marxism-Leninism. People in the West often underestimate the impact of the "de-stalinization" campaign which came in the interim. We have long been convinced of Stalin's tyranny, so the substance of Khrushchev's revelations came as no surprise. But for the Soviet people they were a seismic shock—a shock which in one fell swoop struck down their god, damned their faith, and cast mud upon their achievements.

Mr. Kalb was in a particularly favorable position to probe the depth of disillusionment, particularly among the young. He was working on a doctoral thesis. In his search for source materials, he entered libraries, had conversations, and attended meetings not often open to Westerners—let alone diplomats. One diary entry after another records the growing sense of insecurity and lack of purpose, the rampant cynicism and materialism of Soviet society. The picture is not confined to Moscow. He makes a long journey to Central Asia and the Caucasus, shorter trips to Kiev and Leningrad. Exotic customs and places mix with filth and poverty to make up the Soviet reality.

The diary assumes almost a narrative quality as events move to a climax. In Tbilisi, conversations with Georgian students confirm that they rioted against the denigration of Stalin—to them still a Georgian hero—in March 1956. In Moscow by autumn, he attends several Communist Party lectures for students in Lenin Library. The Polish and Hungarian crises dominate the proceedings. Shouts for the truth drown out the speaker, and the crowded audience walks out *en masse* when their questions go unanswered. By November 18—when news comes of a two-day strike in the Kaganovich ball-bearing plant—Mr. Kalb believes: "The pot is boiling, but whether it will bubble over or simmer down is still not clear."

If the author had not had such high hopes, he would not have had such deep disappointments. Somehow he gives the impression that Mr. Khrushchev's ostentatious toast to "fighter" Stalin in February 1957 not only ends his book but also ends a snow-balling movement toward revolutionary upheaval. Quite early in the diary Mr. Kalb states his deep faith in the "humanitarian liberal" strain of Russian history. He believes it will triumph over that other strain—"the centralized monolith" which is now "past its glory." Even earlier—in his preface—he gives two conclusions to support this thesis: that Russia is in a "period of transition" to a "new" but still vague alternative to "old" communism; and, that Communist ideology is "regarded with mounting skepticism."

All this is well and good, but Mr. Kalb would have been wiser to keep his conclusions for the end of his diary. Placed in the the front, they appear too much like preconceptions he set out to verify through a sojourn in Russia. Indeed, too often throughout the diary he is preaching, not listening. Here is an uneven contest of wits, the reader begins to feel, where the American champion demolishes one hapless Soviet challenger after another. How can such a system work with such intellectual poverty, we ask? Yet Mr. Kalb himself assures us—in his preface conclusions—that the "educational and economic system" *does* work. Where then is the flesh and blood, the drive, the stability? The answer may be that the present system is far more part of the Russians than Mr. Kalb believes.

MORE COMPREHENSIVE and less personal than the other two books is Irving Levine's *Main Street, USSR*. Despite its excessive length, the book might have been called, "Handbook, USSR." Mr. Levine's aim is "to con-

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vey some basic information," not to be "encyclopedic" or "definitive." He marshals together a myriad of facts and figures, interlarding them with anecdotes and personal experiences (Mr. Levine has been a Moscow correspondent for the National Broadcasting Company since 1955), and touching on almost every facet of Soviet life in the process.

Facts of Soviet agriculture are supplemented with sketches of collective farms the author visited; a picture of religion is supplied by his description of Orthodox churches, mosques in Tashkent and Bukhara, a synagogue in Bukhara, as well as the party-line Museum of the History of Religion (formerly Kazan Cathedral) in Leningrad. He takes us into a store or two, into several factories, the Central Bank, the Bolshoi Theater—to illustrate basic facts about living conditions, working conditions, banking and insurance, the training of Russian ballerinas. Bits of interesting detail appear everywhere: where to buy street maps of Moscow, how to use public telephones (dial D-2 05 25 for weather information), the cost of a set of false teeth, the fact that there is not a single toilet in the whole of the mammoth Moscow Metro.

The result is not altogether satisfying. The book is badly organized and has no index, unlike John Gunther's recent collection of similar information. It suffers from a bad case of poor editing. Whole passages appear two or three times, sometimes in different chapters, sometimes only a few pages apart. Sentences and paragraphs often do not follow one another logically. The first two chapters on the country and people resemble an impressionistic picture blurred by too many haphazard strokes of the pen.

The book contains occasional misinterpretations and inconsistencies. For instance, Mr. Levine says Khrushchev's educational reforms are a retreat away from the ten-year secondary school back toward the seven-year school. In fact the retreat is not in the amount of schooling: various types of two- or three-year secondary schools are being organized to provide education beyond the lower schools (now set up on an eight-year basis). In many cases, the old ten-year schools will actually be extended a year. The real retreat comes in the wholesale shift in the curricula away from liberal arts to technological education in all of these schools.

Another time the reader is told that a member of "Budenny Collective Farm" in the Crimea earns 8,000 rubles a month, which "approximates the wages of a Moscow factory worker." Yet, 30 pages earlier: "At the Likhatchov Auto Works, formerly the Stalin Plant, in Moscow, where 40,000 workers are employed, wages range from 750 rubles to 3,000 rubles a month." Probably the 8,000 figure is a simple typographical error, but is typical of the kind of misinformation in the book that can be seriously misleading to the lay reader.

When Mr. Levine concentrates on sections of life he knows through constant contact—radio and television, the press, and censorship—he writes with zest and competence. His descriptions of a brief experiment with a give-away show is hilarious. Elsewhere he gives an insight into the life of a foreign correspondent, shows the psychological and technical hazards of censorship, and relates comical and not-so-comical episodes in Moscow life. The reader discovers how difficult it is to transmit a balanced picture of the Soviet Union to the outside world.

ALL THREE OF THESE BOOKS reach many of the same conclusions: that the Russians really want peace (although Mr. Kalb has some reservations about the Soviet leaders); that despite the scientific and industrial progress represented by sputniks, the standard of living is still appallingly low, the economy inefficient and backward; that there is growing pressure for change, but not for overthrowing the system (here again, Mr. Kalb has his doubts).

Mr. Levine alone looks ahead to the real time of danger in the future, when the most fanatical Communists realize the West is not in an inevitable state of decay. What he concludes is both realistic and consoling for those with strong fears of Soviet military might:

Great changes are in motion in Russia. Education has produced sputniks; it has also created a hunger for contacts with the outside world, for more goods, for a measure of self-expression. The acquisition of property and the dimming of fanaticism act as a brake on adventurist Soviet policies. Time may be on the side of the democratic West in eventually shaping a Russia that is more moderate, more reasonable, more amenable to living and letting live.

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Moscow and the WFTU

WE WOULD BE VERY POOR revolutionaries if in the great proletarian war for emancipation and socialism we did not know how to utilize every popular movement against each separate disaster caused by imperialism in order to sharpen and extend the crisis.[1]

Since Lenin wrote these words over forty years ago, world conditions have altered considerably and the particular circumstances which he had in mind no longer exist. Nevertheless the principle he enunciated remains valid for Communist political strategists, although they have had to adapt it in many ways to the constantly changing correlation between Communist policies and the international situation.

In the climate of the cold war the Communists have attempted—among other efforts—to apply Lenin's blueprint through international mass organizations which, as originally "advertised," were to have no overt political affiliations but merely were to unite various groups and individuals sharing the same interests or holding the same views. Immediately after the war several such organizations were founded, some on the basis of prewar predecessors, with the participation of representatives from both Communist and non-Communist countries. Non-Communist delegates took part in the work, for example, of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the International Union of Students (IUS), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the International Federation of Democratic Women, the International Organization of Journalists, and others.

From the first, however, Communist or pro-Communist influence predominated in these organizations. By 1949 the fundamental divergence of views and purposes between the Communists and non-Communists had become so pronounced that in most cases Western representatives withdrew in protest; since then the front organizations have operated as unquestioning endorsers of the Moscow line.

The way in which the Communists have manipulated and utilized the front groups is perhaps best illustrated by a case study: the World Federation of Trade Unions has been chosen because of its size and importance, and because it is to a considerable degree typical of all the groups in its policy, organization and development.

THE WFTU WAS SET UP in London in February 1945. On that occasion the representatives of the British Trade Union Congress, mindful of the activities of the "Red International" in the 1920's, warned that international working-class solidarity could not be attained if politics were allowed to dominate the work of the WFTU. Some Western trade union organizations such as the American Federation of Labor showed a caution later proved warranted in refusing to join the WFTU from the start.

Those Western labor organizations which did join found themselves faced with the double disadvantage of the Communists' numerical preponderance and their absolute unity of action. The Communists did not at first push for total authority; but in the initial election of WFTU executive bodies and permanent officials, they were able to capture enough of the key leadership positions for their nominees to override opposition and to ensure that the party line would be propagated in WFTU publications and official statements. The misgivings increasingly felt by Western members were accentuated by the difficulties the trade unions of their own countries were encountering as a result of Communist infiltration efforts. For instance, the split of the French trade union movement between the Communist-led CGT and the Force Ouvrière understandably had an impact on the attitude of some Frenchmen to the WFTU.

Though the WFTU was thus beset with political differences from its inception, the first issue to cause all-out battle was the Marshall Plan for European recovery. When the plan was first announced the Western trade unions suggested the setting up of trade-union consultative machinery to study its proposals. The WFTU Bureau, meeting in November 1947, refused even to discuss the subject. The Western unions thereupon went ahead and organized their own body to assess the plan's merits. The British TUC, reluctant to see the framework of international labor solidarity threatened, proposed that WFTU activities be suspended for a year, hoping that after that period agreement on many controversial issues might become easier. This proposal was also rejected by the Communist members.

In the course of 1948 the world situation deteriorated rapidly. The take-over of Czechoslovakia, Tito's break with Stalin and the onset of the first Berlin crisis led to a general stiffening of attitudes on both sides. On all these issues the WFTU Bureau supported the USSR. It was at this point that the non-Communist Western trade unions

[1] V. I. Lenin, "Discussion of self-determination summed up," (1916), *Selected Works,* International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. 5, p. 305.

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became at last convinced they could no longer remain affiliated with an organization which publicly condemned the policies they endorsed, and vice versa; thus, early in 1949 the British TUC, the American CIO and the Dutch trade unions withdrew from the WFTU, followed in due course by the other non-Communist Western unions. Many of these joined with other Western labor organizations, including the AFL, to form the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The Communist-dominated Western trade unions such as the influential French CGT and Italian CGIL remained, of course, in the WFTU.

THE INDELIBLE COMMUNIST imprint on the WFTU has been apparent in its internal organization as well as in its general policies and so-called "labor" activities. Like most of the international "fronts", the WFTU is organized according to the principles of Communist "democratic centralism": its main bodies are a Congress, which meets infrequently and serves a largely approbative function, a quasi-elective Council (equivalent in its role to the Communist Central Committee) and a small Executive in absolute control at the top. In almost all of the "front" organizations, this Executive has been continuously in the grip of a decisive Communist majority. Presumably by its choice, the finances of the organizations are rarely made known.

The WFTU claims a total membership of about 95 million workers, an estimated 75 percent of which is drawn from the Sino-Soviet orbit. As far as non-Communist countries are concerned, associations are affiliated as a whole; thus an affiliate's entire membership is committed to the WFTU organization without necessarily being consulted. This is again characteristic of many of the Communist-dominated organizations, but particularly of the WFTU.

The day-to-day administration of WFTU business is carried on by a permanent Secretariat. Expelled from Paris in 1951, the Secretariat moved to the Soviet sector of Vienna where—under the protection of the Soviet occupying power—it remained for five years, all the while deliberately disregarding Austrian registration laws despite repeated protests of the government. When the occupation of Austria ended, it retreated behind the Iron Curtain to Prague, whence it operates today.

Permanent WFTU operations are organized on both a geographic and an occupational basis. Toward the former end, Regional Liaison Bureaus are operated under the control of the Secretariat, covering such broad areas as Asia, Latin America, *etc.* Toward the latter, so-called Trade Unions' Internationals (TUI's) have been set up to coordinate union activity in specific trades and industries—agriculture and forestry, building, the chemical industry, catering, textiles, transport, and various others. In terms of formal organization the TUI's operate separately from the WFTU, but it is significant that the three most important—the Metal and Engineering Workers, the Miners, and the Transport, Port and Fishery Workers—are housed in the same building in Prague as the WFTU Secretariat, and indeed moved there with it from Vienna. Essentially the TUI's duplicate the work of the WFTU, attempting to channelize its appeal within the particular sector of their responsibility.

THE FUNCTION FOR WHICH this large apparatus was created is perhaps most simply indicated in a Soviet doctrinal statement of some ten years ago: "The Communist parties, particularly in circumstances obtaining in the West, would be unable to develop and grow in strength if they lacked the earnest support of the trade unions and their leaders."[2] To the Communist leadership is Moscow, the WFTU is important on two counts: through its legitimate trade-union as well as propaganda activities, it can help to enrol mass support for the Communist cause; and through its indirect hold over members of affiliated unions outside the Sino-Soviet orbit, it can—at least in theory—be called upon to promote direct action in implementation of Communist policies.

The WFTU's endeavors in both of these directions have, however, been seriously hampered by the clumsy manner in which it has allowed itself to become identified with Soviet policies. Certainly in certain West European countries, the growing recognition of its true loyalties has made its appeal less and less effective, compelling the Communists to rely more on direct infiltration into existing trade unions for support. While this infiltration effort is directed by indigenous Communist parties rather than by the WFTU, it does at least provide the latter with a useful nucleus of allies in countries whose national trade union centers are opposed to its program.[3]

In particular, the WFTU's ability to promote industrial action in support of Communist policies has been far more limited than its propaganda likes to pretend. Over the years it has issued numerous calls for direct action in the form of strikes, slow-downs or protests to back up Communist positions (usually in objection to Western policies).[4] The justification for these appeals has varied

[2] *Profsoyuzy SSSR* (Moscow), November 1948.

[3] To cite an example, although the British TUC is a member of the ICFTU, a number of British shop stewards took part in a WFTU-sponsored conference of metal and engineering workers in 1951, the aim of which was to encourage resistance to increased production in the defense industries of NATO countries.

[4] The general tenor of such appeals is reflected in Saillant's statement before the World Peace Council in Stockholm in 1950: "We should state that one of the essential duties of the defenders of peace is the refusal to work on and produce war material in all capitalistic countries." A follow-up appeal, issued by the Administrative Committee of the Transport TUI of the WFTU on September 18, 1950, directed: "Expand the network of peace committees, intensify the campaign . . . to paralyze the transport of war material in countries preparing for a third world war."

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to some extent with the issue, but the general logic behind them has been simply put by the Czechoslovak trade union daily *Práce:*

> . . . a strike in a capitalist country is a very effective way of fighting for peace, since it aims at paralyzing war production and the transport of arms. . . . [On the other hand] to put the arms of outstanding quality which we produce into the hands of the defenders of peace, into the hands of our people's army, that is [also] an act of peace.[5]

On the whole the appeals for direct action have been manifestly unsuccessful in evoking a response. Their effective use has been limited to a few isolated instances such as the refusal of French dockers to load arms for Indochina in 1953.

ON THE SIDE OF positive tactics the endeavors of the WFTU have, as was noted, been divided between legitimate trade union concerns and propaganda in support of the general Communist line. With regard to the first type of activity, the WFTU lends its vigorous support to many reasonable demands for the amelioration of working conditions. There is only one catch. That is that the concern it shows for labor and union interests is confined entirely to the non-Communist world.

The WFTU is only too anxious to seize upon any labor grievance outside the Sino-Soviet orbit and to pursue the issue with gusto. But it wears tight blinders to the many injustices suffered by the bulk of its membership in the USSR, China and Eastern Europe: since its foundation in 1945, it has not once taken up a cause in the interest of the hard-pressed workers behind the Iron Curtain.

An example which particularly demonstrates the contradiction between these two attitudes is provided by the WFTU's position on automation. In a speech to the International Conference of Metal and Engineering Workers in Prague in September 1958, Louis Saillant, Secretary-General of the WFTU, waxed eloquent on the fact that workers in the capitalist countries feared automation because it resulted in unemployment; but in the same speech he asserted that automation in the socialist countries has led to increased labor productivity and thus has added to the prosperity of the entire nation. A "Commission for the Automobile Industry," set up by this conference, also heard tales of suffering allegedly caused by automation throughout Western Europe, yet it gave a favorable reception to the director of Czechoslovakia's biggest automobile works, who claimed that in his country automation was the foundation of increasing living standards.[6]

The double standard applied by the WFTU to its members is also well illustrated by an article in its monthly publication, *The World Trade Union Movement*, in September 1956. Discussing India's five-year plan, the magazine readily acknowledged that the Indian workers would benefit from the fulfilment of the plan targets, particularly if the resulting wealth were to be distributed equitably. But, it argued, the desire to see the plan implemented should not cause Indian workers to abandon their right to strike for higher wages. Naturally the WFTU supports economic plans in the Communist countries—yet there is nothing on record to indicate that it has ever advised its members there to strike for an improvement in their working conditions.

By the very nature of its composition the WFTU must apply this double standard in all matters affecting social policy and labor conditions. It is simply a matter of logic that the WFTU top leadership, composed almost entirely of Communists and reliant on a "membership" figure three-fourths of which is from the Communist world, should obey the dictates of Soviet interests. If trade unions in a Communist country "cannot," in the words of a Rumanian union official, "have interests contrary to those of the people's democratic state,"[7] then by analogy the WFTU—the international Communist trade union movement—must submit to the prototype and leader of world communism, the Soviet Union. In fact, the WFTU makes no secret of its allegiance to Moscow. Indicative of the sentiment which governs all its actions was its statement on the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution: "All the attempts of the monopolist forces to isolate the USSR have been checked because the deep feeling of solidarity which the workers of all countries feel for their brothers in the first socialist state has constantly grown during these 40 years."[8]

THIS IS AN APT introduction to the last-named category of WFTU activity, its propaganda efforts in support of the general Soviet-Communist line. Since its foundation the WFTU has neglected no opportunity to come out in support of Soviet foreign policy. It gave its blanket approval to Communist condemnations of UN action in Korea, of the French rearguard engagement in Indochina, of British colonial policy, of US policy on Formosa, and, of course, of West German rearmament. It also approved Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe and Soviet action in Hungary. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the merits or demerits of Soviet foreign policy, but merely to show that the WFTU *at all times* supports that policy. On some of the issues listed above, the USSR—and with it the WFTU—may well have been right in the eyes of many non-Communist people. But there are two instances at least when the WFTU approved Soviet actions which the overwhelming majority of non-Communists (and incidentally many Communists, too) condemned. In Soviet

[5] *Práce* (Prague), March 28, 1952.

[6] Czechoslovak News Agency (CTK), September 22-24, 1958.

[7] From a broadcast by Georghe Apostol, former chairman of the Rumanian Trade Union Council, Bucharest Radio, September 4, 1956.

[8] *World Trade Union Movement* (Prague), No. 10, 1957.

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eyes there might have been some justification for Moscow's policy towards Yugoslavia in 1948 and towards Hungary in 1956. But there is no reason why the WFTU, if it were the independent trade-union organization it claims to be, would have reiterated the complete Soviet propaganda line on both these occasions.

After Moscow's break with Yugoslavia, the WFTU and the other international front organizations immediately proceeded to ostracize Yugoslavia. The WFTU in fact got rid of its Yugoslav affiliates. When, after Stalin's death, the USSR reversed its policy towards Yugoslavia, the WFTU again followed suit and invited the Yugoslavs to rejoin. Khrushchev may have tried to blame the original "error" on the late Beria, but what connection could the Soviet police chief have with an independent international organization? The Yugoslavs have refused to rejoin the WFTU, though they do send observers to some meetings.

The WFTU's interpretation of the Hungarian uprising was again identical to that of the Soviet government. No sooner had the Hungarian workers won their short-lived freedom than the National Federation of Free Hungarian Trade Unions withdrew from the WFTU.[9] Needless to say, with the return of Soviet troops to Budapest the link between the WFTU and the Hungarian unions was restored. At no stage did the WFTU express any sympathy with Hungarian opposition to foreign domination. A commission led by Saillant went to Hungary in November 1956 and its report fully endorsed the official Communist stand on the causes and course of the uprising. This attitude must be compared with the WFTU's stand on events in the countries which are described as colonial or semi-colonial in Communist parlance. For example a special resolution of the 1953 WFTU Congress in Vienna called on all labor movements to unite against "brutal and bloody imperialist repression" in colonial areas.[10] It remains to be seen how the WFTU will analyze the present situation in Tibet.

In the same vein, the WFTU's current campaign against West European integration—just as in the case of its earlier opposition to the Marshall Plan—is motivated not by its professed solicitude for the welfare of European workers but by the desire to prevent any strengthening of the Western world. Today it cannot be denied that the Marshall Plan was beneficial for the working classes of the recipient countries; it is equally evident that the moves toward West European economic unity will in the long run help to raise living standards. Nevertheless industrial action against, for example, the European Common Market, has been threatened by the WFTU. In his closing speech at the last WFTU Congress in Leipzig in October 1957 Saillant declared:

> There is no question of the WFTU giving any help in the development of the structure [*i.e.*, the Common Market] which the monopolies and capitalists are erecting to increase their profits. For us the best battlefield is on the factory floor, at the point of production. Every national trade organization must help.[11]

Saillant's reasons for condemning the Common Market are simply a paraphrase of those advanced by the Soviet Government: ". . . the plans of the big monopolies, far from being prompted by concern for the living standards of the people are dictated by the narrow interests of obtaining big profits."[12]

On questions like disarmament, the prohibition of nuclear tests, summit meetings, *etc.*, the WFTU has faithfully followed the Soviet line throughout. At its meeting in Budapest in March 1958, the Executive passed a resolution asking the Western powers to follow the Soviet example of suspending nuclear tests. An International Week against Atomic War was scheduled for October 1958.[13] In the meantime, however, the USSR resumed its testing of nuclear weapons: at a press conference in Prague on October 3, 1958, Saillant was forced to do an about face to uphold the Soviet tests "as one of the means of defense in a socialist country."[14]

THE WFTU HAS FAILED to attain many of its declared political aims. In fact, it has succeeded only where Soviet foreign policy has achieved its aims, and it has failed where Moscow has failed. This perhaps best illustrates the relationship between the WFTU and the USSR. It is also noteworthy that the modifications of Communist policies after Stalin's death have not affected the WFTU nor indeed any of the other front organizations. Their support of the USSR and their analysis of the world scene is as stereotyped as in Stalin's lifetime. This fact was underscored by one of the Yugoslav observers at the WFTU Congress at Leipzig in 1957, who later issued the following significant criticism:

> Little attention was devoted to social changes, and particularly changes in the economic-social structure of developed capitalist countries. There was also no broad analysis . . . of the role and problems of trade unions in the socialist countries.[15]

That the leaders of the WFTU are both aware of and anxious over their failures seems indicated by the course of their latter-day tactics. In their effort to undermine the prestige of the free trade unions their attitude toward them has alternated increasingly between insults and blandishments. Lately the solidarity theme has been vigorously advanced; the Leipzig Congress even went so far

[9] Budapest Radio, October 31, 1956.
[10] *New Times* (Moscow), No. 44, 1953.
[11] *World Trade Union Movement*, No. 12, 1957.
[12] Statement of the USSR Foreign Ministry, Moscow Radio, March 16, 1957.
[13] TASS, April 7, 1958.
[14] CTK, October 3, 1958.
[15] *Kommunist* (Belgrade), October 25, 1957.

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as to amend the WFTU Constitution to allow non-affiliated unions to attend future congresses. The WFTU has also appealed for more money for its "International Solidarity Fund," which is used for work among trade unions and laboring groups in underdeveloped areas.[10]

Both sides in the cold war are, of course, devoting increased attention and more and more money to the advancement of their case in the countries now just beginning to industrialize. With the emergence of an industrial proletariat in Asia and Africa the WFTU's potential importance is enhanced just as is that of organized free trade unionism. However, the WFTU's argument that it is best fitted to represent the interests of the working classes of these countries cannot stand up to the evidence of its record in other parts of the world. This claim could only be considered if the WFTU were to show signs of independent thinking in international affairs and were to concern itself as much with the condition of workers in the Communist world—that is, with the problems of a large part of its own membership—as with the lot of the proletariat outside the Sino-Soviet orbit.

Otto Pick
Andrew Wiseman

Messrs. Pick and Wiseman are British writers whose articles have appeared frequently in this journal under the joint pseudonym of Andrew Haven.

[10] *World Trade Union News* (Prague), Nos. 19-20, 1957.

Correspondence

EDITORS' NOTE: Readers are welcome to send communications dealing with matters discussed in *Problems of Communism*. Letters should be addressed to the Editors, *Problems of Communism*, U.S. Information Agency, 1729 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington 25, D. C.

LENIN, GERMANY AND THE REVOLUTION

No book on the Russian revolution will be liked by everybody. It is clearly within the prerogatives of your reviewer to dislike Alan Moorehead's *The Russian Revolution* (issue of January-February, 1959). Hence I will not argue about his misinterpretations of Moorehead's message, nor even take him to task for his ungentlemanlike *faux pas* of associating Moorehead with the *Protocols of the Elder Men of Zion*.

Mr. Carsten agrees that "Lenin was as unscrupulous about using German aid as he was about the use of money obtained through expropriation raids or other doubtful means." So, Lenin did get German money and used it. With this basic fact on record, allow me to comment on a few related questions.

1) Was this German support a necessary condition of Lenin's rise to power? Mr. Carsten believes that German support "clearly facilitated" the Bolshevik success. I agree with this formula so far as it applies to financial aid. However, without German support in a broader sense, Lenin might never have returned to Russia. If his return had been delayed, he would have found the party firmly in the hands of people willing to compromise with the moderates. Hence, even assuming that Lenin could have perfomed effectively without German money, he might not have been able to influence policy as strongly as he did and the party might not have grown as rapidly as it grew in the historical reality. A delay of Lenin's impact on the Russian scene would have provided the provisional government with a chance to consolidate. If we assume that the German maneuver of dispatching Lenin to Russia did not affect events at all, we must postulate that his role was altogether inconsequential.

2) Did German money create the revolutionary situation? Obviously, money is not the *demiurgos* of history. The revolutionary situation of 1917 resulted from war, defeat, casualties, disorganization, the policies of both the Tsarist and the provisional government, and the development of the revolutionary movement in general. German political warfare was applied within this context which it did not create, as it did not create Lenin's leadership ability. However, German support to various revolutionary and non-revolutionary groups contributed to the depth of the crisis.

3) Were the deals between Bolsheviks and Germans restricted to money? The significance of financial support is overrated. By November 1917, the Germans had actually spent about 10,000,000 Marks on the Russian revolution. This sum undoubtedly exceeded the amounts paid to the Bolsheviks. We know that Lenin's communications from Switzerland with the party in Russia were "clearly facilitated" by the Germans. Lenin made available intelligence information and put the Germans on to sabotage experts. The Germans printed propaganda tracts for the Bolsheviks and smuggled them into Russia. A large percentage of the funds which the Germans spent on the Russian revolution to recipients *other* than the Bolsheviks was transferred to Russia, thanks to organizational ar-

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rangements between the Germans and the Bolsheviks. Hence money was one facet in the complex German-Bolshevik relationship.

4) Does emphasis upon this German impact on the Russian revolution imply acceptance of a "conspiratorial" interpretation of history? In Mr. Carsten's words, do "the leading actors become little chessmen moved about at the master's command?" Vast historical processes have multiple and interrelated causes, *e.g.* socio-economic transformations, changes in technology and ideology, and mass movements. Yet "conspiracies" also play a role. There is ample—and largely uncontested—evidence that Germany had been waging political warfare since the time of Bismarck. Between August 1914 and January 1918, Germany expended at least 300,000,000 Marks on this type of warfare against all hostile nations, except Britain where it was unable to recruit helpers. Unless one is prepared to disregard a major portion of political history, it will not do to ignore such a large and carefully conceived effort.

5) Was Lenin a German agent? To the Germans, Lenin was one of their tools. To Lenin, the Germans were one of his tools. Lenin was a fanatical Communist. He resorted to tactics which most of his comrades would have rejected, precisely because he was an uninhibited fanatic.

Before supporting Lenin, the Germans, in 1915, queried him about his plans. Lenin transmitted a program which placed major emphasis on the right of self-determination and which minimized his social objectives. This program was tailored to suit German desires and foreshadowed the Brest-Litovsk treaty.

The Germans knew their business and did not confuse Lenin with a common "diversionist." Political warfare cannot be conducted through marionettes. A politician who participates in a political warfare campaign and receives subversive money is not supposed to act on foreign "orders." Lenin did not need German instructions to plunge Russia into chaos. We do know, however, that while in Switzerland Lenin refused to cooperate on several issues and was temporarily deprived of funds. Later instances of his acting contrary to German wishes also are in evidence. But did the Germans exploit their secret hold over Lenin? This is still a partially unsolved problem.

6) Did Lenin use German money for private purposes? The German documents are silent on this point. However, Madam Krupskaya's memoirs contain data on Lenin's finances during World War I. Calculations will show that the Lenins must have spent more money than she indicates. Together with Lenin's letters and the Wilhelmstrasse archives, her book dicloses that Lenin's financial difficulties were acute each time when German payments were not forthcoming. There is no question that the Lenins were living modestly. Still, the story of Lenin's frugality has been considerably overdone.

7) Once in power, did Lenin work "as strenuously for the overthrow of the Imperial (German) government as he had worked for that of the Russian provisional government," to use Mr. Casten's wording? Lenin was a Russian and had his hands full in Russia. Obviously, it was not his primary job to work for the overthrow of the German Kaiser. Lenin made a few *perfunctory* attempts to foster the German revolution, but I see no evidence that he undertook a major program to implant communism in Germany. Despite frantic searches, the East German historians apparently did not find such evidence either.

I am amazed at an attitude which makes of Lenin a sort of holy cow whose motivations and maneuvers must be shielded against realistic historical appraisal. Lenin's character is as little exempt from analysis as that of Stalin, or Nicholas II, or anybody else. I believe that Lenin's methods destroyed whatever idealism there was in prewar communism. The monstrosities of the Stalin era have their origin in Lenin's lack of scruples and hence in his "character." Lenin never denied being a Machiavellian. What *are* the characteristics of a 20th century Machiavellian? Lenin himself would have laughed at the childish attempts to paint him as a person who considered his political actions limited by a morality in which he did not believe.

Stefan T. Possony
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Mr. Carsten replies: I am pleased to notice that Professor Possony agrees with me that "the revolutionary situation of 1917 resulted from war, defeat, casualties, disorganization, the policies of both the Tsarist and Provisional government, and the development of the revolutionary movement in general." This is exactly the point which has been lost sight of by several of the contributors to the recent controversy about the German documents relating to the Russian Revolution, and which Mr. Moorehead has failed to emphasize in his account of it. That German money was nevertheless an important factor I have said very clearly: but not only German money, for other revolutionary parties and groups also received money from abroad, from the governments of the Entente countries. In my opinion, it is not the historian's task to distribute censure on moral or other grounds, but to try to see historical developments in their proper perspective: this is exactly what Mr. Moorehead has not done.

I equally agree with Professor Possony that "Lenin himself would have laughed at the childish attempts to paint him as a person who considered his political actions limited by a morality in which he did not believe." As I put in my review:

Lenin was as unscrupulous about using German aid as he was about the use of money obtained through expropria-

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tion raids or other doubtful means. To Lenin it was essential to come into power, and the means by which he did so were a matter of secondary importance. If he did not say "the end justifies the means" in so many words, this nevertheless suggests a motto for his actions. . . .

This, according to Professor Possony, is an "attitude which makes of Lenin a sort of holy cow whose motivations and maneuvers must be shielded against realistic historical appraisal." I think I am entitled to be "amazed" at his interpretation of what I wrote.

Coming to the subject matter, Professor Possony, in trying to show that Lenin was a German agent, makes four points. The first is that "Lenin made available intelligence information and put the Germans on to sabotage experts." This, if it could be verified, would be important; but where is the evidence? There is none either in the documents published by Mr. Zeman or in Mr. Moorehead's book.

Secondly, Professor Possony asserts that the memoirs of Krupskaya "disclose that Lenin's financial difficulties were acute each time when German payments were not forthcoming." As we know from the Wilhelmstrasse documents, the Kaiser's government paid millions of marks for Russian revolutionary propaganda to Dr. Alexander Helphand (Parvus). If "Lenin used German money for private purposes", why should he have been in financial difficulties? If he was, does this not indicate that the German millions were spent on revolutionary propaganda? A fraction of these funds would have been enough to provide for them, as "the Lenins were living modestly." The chapters in the memoirs of Krupskaya describing the Lenins' stay in Switzerland actually contain only two passages referring to financial difficulties. In a letter dated April 8, 1915, she wrote: "Even here the question of earnings will become acute for all of us in the near future."[1] That was in the month following the payment of two million marks to Parvus by the German government! The second passage refers not to any specific date, but generally to the autumn of 1916 and the beginning of 1917:

> At that time we instituted a doubly rigid economy in our personal life. Ilyich searched everywhere for something to earn. . . . The prospect of earning something by writing was rather poor, and I therefore decided to look for work in Zurich. . . . Funds were very low at that time and there were more projects than real assistance. . . .[2]

That is all. Certainly, these passages do not bear out the assertion of Professor Possony, but rather seem to indicate the opposite. In fact, they do not "disclose" anything.

Third, in September 1915 Lenin drew up a list of the conditions on which a Russian revolutionary government would be prepared to conclude peace with Germany. These were:

1. The establishment of a republic.
2. The confiscation of large land holdings.
3. The eight-hour working day.
4. Full autonomy for all nationalities.
5. An offer of peace without any consideration for France, but on condition that Germany renounce all annexations and war reparations.
6. The Russian armies to leave Turkey immediately, in other words, a renunciation of claims to Constantinople and the Dardanelles.
7. Russian troops to move into India.[3]

"This program", Professor Possony says, "was tailored to suit German desires and foreshadowed the Brest-Litovsk treaty." Why and how? This program, including the slogans on national self-determination and the renunciation of all annexations and indemnities (which *Germany* was to renounce), was in complete accordance with the published views of Lenin, but it was in flagrant opposition to the policy of the Kaiser's government. Even the last condition was in the best Jacobin tradition and part of the fight against imperialism, in support of the struggle for freedom of a colonial people.

Fourth, Professor Possony asserts that "Lenin made a few *perfunctory* attempts to foster the German revolution, but I see no evidence that he undertook a major program to implant communism in Germany." Obviously, Lenin "had his hands full in Russia," but to him the overthrow of the Kaiser's government was a question of life and death because of the shackles which this government had imposed upon Russia by the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and which could only be removed by the downfall of Imperial Germany. Quite apart from this, Lenin to the end of his life was convinced that the Russian Revolution needed the help of the workers of the more advanced capitalist countries; in the interest of that revolution world revolution was necessary. Among the advanced capitalist countries, Germany—where an independent revolution broke out in 1918—occupied pride of place. Hence the frantic and ill-conceived efforts of the Bolsheviks to bring down not only the Kaiser's government, but also that of the Weimar Republic. Until Hitler seized power the German Communist Party, under orders from Moscow, continued to work for the overthrow of the Weimar Republic and to fight the Social Democrats as their "main enemy", being clearly unable to modify their views and to see the real danger—until it was too late. The "few *perfunctory* attempts" certainly were one of the causes of the fall of the Weimar Republic, and the result was proclaimed as "a victory of the German working class" by the Communist leaders—facts which even

[1] Nadezhda K. Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin*, Martin Lawrence, London, 1932, Vol. II, p. 180.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6.

[3] Z. A. B. Zeman, *Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-1918*, Oxford University Press, London & New York, 1958, p. 6, No. 6.

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the "frantic searches" of the East German historians cannot alter.

Lenin during World War I made a bargain with the Kaiser's government—and clearly got much the better part of the bargain. But that did not make him a German agent; he continued to pursue his own policy, independent of the wishes or orders of Berlin, working for the overthrow of the Tsarist government and equally for the victory of world revolution. I fail to see why the statement of these facts "makes of Lenin a sort of holy cow whose motivations and maneuvers must be shielded against realistic historical appraisal."

THE SCHOOL REFORM AND SOVIET LABOR

After reading Mr. DeWitt's article on Soviet educational reforms, which the author claims are "in great part" due to unfavorable demographic trends, I find myself impressed but unconvinced.

Mr. DeWitt's estimate that there will be a "deficit" of about 14,000,000 people aged 18-24 in 1959-65 looks impressive until one recalls that the seven-year plan provides for 12,000,000 workers to be added to the industial labor force alone, *i.e.*, almost the same number as during the 1950-57 period, when this sector grew by about 12.2 million. (This ignores the approximately 2,000,000 MTS workers transferred to industry in 1953-54, who are now being switched back again to the collectives.)

The term "deficit" appears to have been used in the sense of the shortfall compared with what would have been expected had there been no war. But it is relevant that in normal times, to borrow Prof. Galbraith's expression, the USSR is an "affluent society" where children are concerned. In 1948 there were 23.7 million children in grades 1-4, an average of almost 6,000,000 in each age group. If this figure should be "cut in half by the deficit" due to the war, as Mr. DeWitt expects, an age group will then contain 3,000,000 children, as many as the US obtains in a normal year. Moreover Khrushchev said that 20 percent of Soviet children do not complete the 7th grade, so that educational statistics are dangerously incomplete.

For comparative purposes, the increase in the US labor force between 1960 and 1965 is expected to be 6,250,000, according to the *Monthly Labor Review* (January 1959). Since no one would claim that the US is likely to suffer from a labor shortage, is it rational to argue that the USSR will, despite almost 500,000 workers more each year? It would be more accurate to say that whereas normally the USSR has an outstandingly high rate of labor intake, for the next few years it will have one more closely approximating but higher than that of the US.

After demonstrating a relative, not a real, manpower shortage, Mr. DeWitt argues that "the regime's solution . . . is to cut down the number of school years with required attendance, so as to permit youngsters in the age group 15-18 to enter the labor force . . ." But that, I submit, is the reverse of what the reform does. Mr. DeWitt himself observes that "in the new structure the major component will be the compulsory 8-year school, which will replace the 7-year school.

Hence those children, mainly in the rural areas, who now go straight to work after seven grades, will henceforth be held back for one more year in school. But the collective farms will not be unduly perturbed since, as Khrushchev has twice said, "there is a surplus of manpower in agriculture". Moreover Khrushchev has told the 21st Party Congress that there are more than 45,000,000 collective farmers, so that his rural surplus is indisputable.

Mr. DeWitt's analysis of the vocational labor (11-year) schools states that their pupils will be studying while holding jobs. But in fact the proposed curriculum allots only one-third of their time to production work. (see speech to the Supreme Soviet by I. S. Kairov, *Izvestia*, December 24, 1958), the remaining two-thirds are to be used for general study. As a result, the students will reach the factories for serious production work a year later than if the former (10-year) system had been maintained. Few industrialists would subscribe to the view that production on two days a week, spread over three years, would have as much effect on output as one year of full-time work.

It is often loosely stated that in the future the large majority of Soviet children will go straight to work on leaving 8-year schools. But the figures provided by I. A. Kairov (*Izvestia*, December 24, 1958) point to a different conclusion. He estimated that there will be 36,000,000 8-year pupils in 1965, with 4,800,000 at the schools for workers and rural youth. Thus 4,500,000 children per annum are expected to graduate from the 8-year schools but only 1,600,000 will go on to the part-time workers' and rural youth schools (which provide a 3-year course). It follows that perhaps 2.9 million children a year will pass through the other channels: the 11-year polytechnical schools, the specialized secondary scools and the labor reserves establishments. Of these the specialized secondary schools at present absorb about 460,000 children a year and the labor reserves schools about 660,000. Thus even after allowing for expansion in both cases, it looks as though the numbers passing through the 11-year polytechnical schools may still be as high as through the present 10-year schools (1,340,000 graduates in 1958).

It is strange that Mr. DeWitt omits to mention the specific provision in the law for pupils now in grades 8-10 to complete the present curricula. In fact there were 5.6 million children in these grades in the 1957-58 year (*Vestnik Statistiki*, No. 11 1958, p. 8), not the 3.5 million estimated in his Chart No. I. Since he is right concerning the number of graduates in 1958 (1,340,000), the average number of 10th-grade graduates alone in 1959 and 1960

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will be an all-time high from this source of labor. Add the 200,000 odd from the universities each year, perhaps 400,000 from the specialized secondary schools, 600,000 or so from the labor reserves schools plus an unknown but substantial number likely to come direct from the 7- and 8-year schools, and it becomes apparent that no real labor shortage will arise. . . .

Finally I am puzzled by Mr. DeWitt's reference to 18-year olds as "the primary age group of those who enter the labor force," which "began to decline in 1957". Is this a misprint for 16-year olds? In past years it was often asserted that the demographic decline would begin in earnest during 1958 as the 16-year olds born in 1942 came on to the labor market. Instead there was in reality an increase of 2.7 million in the industrial labor force alone during 1958 (*Pravda*, January 16, 1959), a figure which was artificially reduced to 1.4 million by the book-keeping transfer of MTS personnel out of the industrial category. In the years 1950-56 inclusive, this rate of growth was never approached, let alone exceeded.

In the light of all these figures, I suggest that the role of the demographic decline in the educational reform has been overestimated. The fact that 8-year schooling will replace the 7-year system, that 11-year polytechnical will replace 10-year secondary schooling, and that technical vocational training (one to three years) will replace the labor reserves courses (now lasting 6 months to 2 years) suggests confidence in the Kremlin that, even with these extensions, there will be adequate labor to produce the 12,000,000 new industrial workers planned for 1965.

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Mr. DeWitt replies: Mr. Gill is "unconvinced" that the Soviet education reform is due largely to unfavorable demographic trends. He does not seem to realize that Soviet education is subordinated to economic planning and that whenever the labor supply gets tight, general schooling gets the ax. In the four decades of Soviet history this is the third time that general education for the masses has met this fate. Spared this time, for obvious reasons, will be technicians, engineers, scientists and other economically useful professionals, who are badly needed to run and service the economy of the Communist state. This was discussed in the original article, and I don't know what can be added which would convince Mr. Gill that *ne fronti crede* is the only safe rule for obtaining an analytical perspective of Soviet reality. . . .

The two pillars of Mr. Gill's argument are that since during the next seven years the Soviet labor force is expected to grow, and since the total school enrollment is also to increase, it follows that there is no population squeeze. Yet this does not follow at all and Mr. Gill's overall logic escapes me. Simply by looking at the labor force and the aggregate school enrollment, it is *not* possible to prove anything at all in regard to the economic and demographic forces behind Khrushchev's school reform. The real culprit—namely, the Soviet population and its distribution by age cohorts, which could have cleared up some of Mr. Gill's misgivings—is missing in his analysis.

Until the Soviets supply us with decent population figures, we have to rely on our own population estimates. On the basis of available school enrollment statistics, we can demonstrate the *trend* in the approximate annual number of 18-year olds in the Soviet Union as follows:

(In millions)

1955	5.5	1961	2.6
1956	4.6	1962	2.3
1957	4.5	1963	2.5
1958	4.4	1964	2.6
1959	3.8	1965	3.0
1960	3.2	1966	3.3

If it had not been for the losses caused by World War II, the "normal" number in the 18-year-old age group would be 4.8 to 5 million. Let Mr. Gill and the reader draw their own conclusions as to whether or not the population deficit is significant, and especially if it is feasible to sustain the present rates of upper-grade enrollment. In the early 1960's, in my judgment at least, education of youths 15 and older will have to be sacrificed.

One thing that we cannot do with these statistics, however, is to compare this Soviet age group with that in the United States and suggest, as Mr. Gill does, that since the USSR will have "as many as the United States obtains in the normal year" (he is wrong about this too: it is not "as many," but "far fewer" for the Soviet Union in 1961-64), these deficits are unreal.

In order to minimize the significance of the population deficit and its impact upon the Soviet labor force, Mr. Gill turns to the semantic distinction between "real" and "relative" shortages. Since by definition all shortages are relative and all are real, Mr. Gill's assurance that "no real labor shortages will arise" and his complaints that I have demonstrated a "relative, not a real, manpower shortage" are devoid of meaning.

Mr. Gill questions whether it is not "a misprint" to state that 18-year olds constitute "the primary age group of those who enter the labor force." This is not a misprint, though Mr. Gill distorts the meaning of the original sentence, which continues with the words "the armed forces, or institutions of higher learning." The number of 18-year olds had in fact begun to decline even in 1956 (not 1957—my error), but this decline has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not the labor force continued to grow slightly, for this growth was affected by other forces (see below). The addition by Mr. Gill of the number of graduates of different ages and from all sorts of educational establishments, for the purpose of showing that there will be "enough" of them in 1959 or

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thereabouts, is completely irrelevant to the question.

Mr. Gill refers erroneously to the Soviet "industrial labor force," which appears to be a misnomer for the Soviet reporting category called "salaried workers and employees". In this category those employed in manufacturing, mining and some public utility industries account for only about one-third of the total number of salaried workers and employees (c. 53,000,000). Furthermore, Mr. Gill, in mentioning increments in this category of employment in the last few years, totally neglects to mention how they were achieved: first, by mere bookkeeping transfers, *i.e.*, the incorporation of artisans and employees of producers cooperatives, subsidiary agricultural and construction enterprises; second, by absorbing the discharged prison camp inmates; and finally, by hiring veterans of the armed forces.

But whatever the faults in his terminology and the cause for increased employment in recent years, Mr. Gill's central point is that the Soviet planners propose to increase their total number of salaried workers and employees during the 1959-65 period by 12,000,000 (from c. 53,000,000 in 1958 to c. 65,000,000 in 1965). Mr. Gill not only considers this *planned* increment feasible (without any substantiation whatever), but also treats it as though it were already realized. Since when can Soviet planned targets be treated as realized facts seven years in advance? Moreover, he claims that this increment contradicts my estimated deficit (c. 14,000,000) of 18-to-24-year olds in 1965. There is no contradiction whatever, for these are *two entirely different issues*. Mr. Gill does *not* ask himself the basic question of how the Russians will secure these 12,000,000 extra hands. He does suggest one source, namely agriculture, where he says there are about 45,000,000 collective farmers, many of them constituting a rural population surplus which might be squeezed into the cities. He fails to mention other sources, however, among which the two principal categories are women and youth—the latter to be integrated at an earlier age into part- or full-time employment as a result of the newly reshaped school system, and most of them to be frozen in these laboring occupations. *This is the essence of the reform.*

Since Mr. Gill accepts on Khrushchev's authority the statement that "there is a surplus of manpower in agriculture," he should also accept Khrushchev's admission that Soviet agricultural productivity is but one-seventh that of the United States. Soviet economists have admitted also that the productivity of labor in American industry is 2.5 times as great as that in Soviet industry. This is a crucial point. But Mr. Gill apparently does not envision how the productivity of labor fits into the picture for labor requirements during the new 7-year plan in agriculture and industry. If he did, he would not make utterly irrelevant comparisons between the supply of labor in the US and the USSR. For where is the logic in stating that the anticipated increment in the USSR's labor force may be *higher* than that of the US, and to argue that the USSR shortage is therefore not "real?"

In regard to Mr. Gill's remark that Soviet "educational statistics are dangerously incomplete," I would agree fully, but would add, at the same time, that they are also dangerously tricky. Mr. Gill complains that the estimates in Chart I contradict Soviet official statistics. He is not only in error about the Soviet figure, but he also misquotes *my* figure. He states that the estimate of 3.5 million pupils in grades 8-10 (as shown in Chart I) is incorrect, for a Soviet source reports that in 1957-58 the enrollment was 5.6 million in grades 8-10. First, the figure of 3.5 million, which Mr. Gill quotes from Chart I, refers to 1958-59 and *not* to 1957-58 . . . Second, the Soviet official figure of 5.6 million (for 1957) does *not* refer only to grade 8-10 enrollment in regular 10-year schools (as do all figures in Chart I) but includes also *students in the corresponding grades 8-01 of schools for working and rural youth*. In the fall of 1957, among a total of 5.6 million students in grades 8-10 as reported officially, about 1.6 million were in grades 8-10 of working and rural youth schools and about 4.0 million (as stated properly for 1957 in Chart I) in those grades of regular schools. Soviet authorities, *in trying to conceal the drop in actual enrollment in the upper grades of regular schools, have aggregated the two types of enrollment.* This statistical maneuver apparently is not known to Mr. Gill. . . .

Mr. Gill quotes Mr. Kairov's highly questionable figure that there "will be 36,000,000 pupils" in grades 1-8 by 1965. This figure was purposely balooned by Mr. Kairov in order to make it look as though more pupils will be in school in 1965 than ever before. The targets of the 7-year plan are more modest, anticipating that in *all* forms of primary and secondary schooling—*i.e.*, grades 1-11 and not just grades 1-8—there will be 38 to 40 million pupils in 1965. Furthermore, Soviet sources have also revealed population birth rates for the years 1950-57, and according to these, in 1965 there will be far fewer than 36 million children in the age group 8-15. Whatever the enrollment, however, it will be concentrated in the lower grades. These considerations notwithstanding, Mr. Gill accepts the figure 36,000,000 and proceeds to divide it by the number of grades, *i.e.*, eight (irrespective of the grade distribution, that is), and tells us that consequently there will be 4.5 million 8th grade graduates (15-year-olds) in 1965!

In this connection it is essential to point out that the low points of population of 18-year-olds are the years 1961-64 and these are, not by coincidence, the target years for the completion of Khrushchev's school reform. The meaning of the educational reform in terms of *integrating youth into the labor force at an early age and retaining them as long as possible* is not just a single year's affair but a process embracing the entire decade, for it is not until 1969 that the 4.5 million age group of 18-year-olds will be restored.

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES—

Soviet Foreign Policy, *by Richard Lowenthal*
What Happened to "Collective Leadership"?, *by Merle Fainsod*
Soviet Farming—Model for Underdeveloped Countries?, *by W.K.*
The Rise and Fall of the New Class, *by Ernst Halperin*
The Chinese Communes: An Appraisal, *by Peter S. H. Tang*

NOTE: The symposium on Soviet society as reflected in Soviet fiction will continue in the forthcoming issue with an article by Vera Alexandrova on Soviet youth.

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